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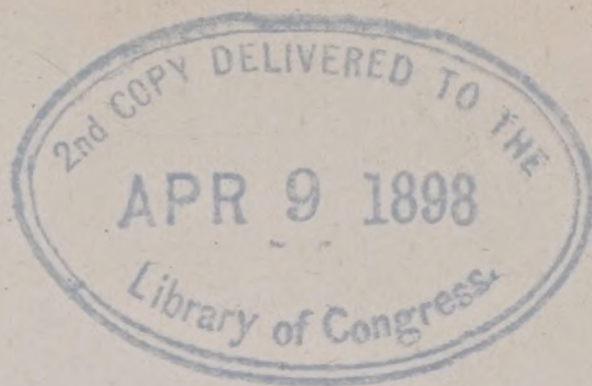








# A YEAR WITH UNCLE JACK.



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BY

W. THOS. CARDEN.

PUBLISHING HOUSE.  
OF M.E. CHURCH SOUTH

NASHVILLE, TENN.:  
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NEW YORK, 1891



DEDICATION.

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To the Sons of Ministers,

WHO ARE STRIVING TO MAKE MEN OF THEMSELVES AND TO BE  
OF USE BOTH TO CHURCH AND STATE,

This Book is Affectionately Inscribed

BY THE AUTHOR.



# DEDICATION

To the State of Minnesota  
and to the people of the State  
and to the people of the State  
and to the people of the State  
and to the people of the State  
and to the people of the State



## PREFACE.

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ALL readers, especially young ones, should know what they are reading. Many authors of fiction try to make their readers believe their work is real. This is a false step, I think; for we will have some characters, bad ones at that, walking around before we know it. I will tell my readers the truth concerning the following story. It is fictitious. It started with a true basis, however, interspersed with real incidents. It originated in a courtship of mine with a pure-charactered girl of a certain neighborhood. We were only friends, and exchanged a few letters of friendship for amusement; these I altered to suit this story. So you see I had a true basis, and supposed the rest. I do not like to leave my readers in doubt, so all may rest assured that I am not married.

Some characters in the story are partly real, while others are not. I detest cliques who offer gilded critiques; and therefore they and all critics must not prepare for a literary feast, for they will not get it. All contained in this volume is of my own production, with a few paraphrases. I am no braggart, remember.

This story is intended to set forth the idea of a youthful marriage, as well as a hasty one, as some one has already said, "A hasty marriage seldom proveth well!" It is a pure, ideal Tennessee story of courtship and youthful marriage. While the author has never experienced the truth of the statement



above, he has observed very closely. He delights in such stories as this, and hopes that his production may be received with favor.

This story is descriptive, teaches moral lessons, and has a deep religious undercurrent in it. The right is made to come forth victorious in the end.

Hoping that the reader will have a happy ramble through this volume, and pardon my first attempt at literary work without any apologies from me, and excuse what needs it, I will try to requite him with another attempt.

May God bless each reader, especially the unmarried. If this story shall bind some true hearts in the blissful ties of the matrimonial relation, and they shall live long, peaceful lives, and have a pleasant journey down the stream of time, and at last anchor in the port of everlasting joy; and if all young people shall take the moral lessons of this volume, then the author will consider his work not in vain, but amply repaid, and will never repent having written the story. So here I leave it with the reader, to commend or condemn.

W. THOS. CARDEN.

LIBERTY, TENN., *July 24, 1896.*



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# A YEAR WITH UNCLE JACK.

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## CHAPTER I.

### WE FIVE.

FONDLY will I remember that one year spent with my Uncle Jack Cartier, who lived at Ledgerwood, a quaint old town of perhaps a century's age, nestled in the picturesque hills of beautiful Tennessee.

My cousins, Ethel and Mamie Bell and Tom Jones, and my sister Lucy and myself, were invited to spend a twelvemonth with Uncle Jack. Lucy and I knew not that the others were invited, and we expected the year to be one of the sorriest in our young lives ; but we were mistaken, and the happiest year of my life was spent at Ledgerwood. Uncle Jack had invited us separately, so as to surprise us.

I was nearly eighteen years old then, a stout, robust fellow, full of life and fun, which seemed to bubble up in me; and all who came in contact with me were more or less infected with my happiness. I was mischievous and bent upon doing wrong; while sister Lucy was a fragile little maid of fifteen, and just my opposite in disposition. She seemed dull, stupid, and I did not think her much company, yet she was one of the most enticing and entertaining girls of her age, so mother said. I never stayed at home much, and could not bear indoor life. It



seemed dreadful to me for one to stay in the house and hardly ever see the beautiful birds, green fields, blooming flowers, and many other attractive things in nature. Lucy nearly always stayed in the house, for she was very delicately constituted.

Cousin Ethel, who was just like her mother—Mrs. Bell, my father's sister—was a good, meek little Christian of fourteen years. She was ever afraid that she would do some wrong. Her sister Mamie was about like me: she enjoyed life, and wanted to have plenty of fun. She was nearly as old as myself, lacking only four months; a perfect tomboy.

Cousin Tom Jones was a country lad of thirteen, the youngest of us five. He knew more of the trees, birds, and animals than an Indian, I thought. He was constantly studying and planning some way to catch rabbits, squirrels, or other creatures, and he had a host of pets. I remember, when I went to see him once, that he had three dogs—one a small shepherd named Spy, another a great Newfoundland called Gladstone, and a small terrier known as General; a cripple jay, which he had found on the road to school; a young rabbit; a squirrel; two young ground squirrels, so sly and cunning that I was well entertained by watching him and his pets as well as listening to wild stories of them; also four cats, and I believe fifteen kittens, a yoke of oxen, and a parrot completed his menagerie.

It was just after Christmas when Lucy and I started. It was snowing a little, and was very cold. The distance from Lincoln, where we lived, to Ledgerwood was forty miles. Papa took us in the buggy to Chesterville, the nearest station, where we were to



take the train. We got very cold on the way, and when we reached the station the train had not arrived. We told papa good-by; and he hitched old Dave, our family horse, and after giving us a little advice (and money) he started for home. We waited and waited, until finally the whistle announced the coming of the train. It arrived, and we went into the second coach and found a comfortable seat.

We traveled fast, and were soon twenty miles from Chesterville. Lucy said that she was hungry; so when the train stopped I went and bought a dozen large, beautiful apples and some sandwiches. Lucy was soon satisfied. I told her that I was going into the next coaches and see who were in there. I went through two and was coming back, when the gaze of four brown eyes of two girls caught mine. I knew the owners in an instant: they were Cousin Ethel and Cousin Mamie. They were very glad to see me, and asked me where Lucy was. I told them that she was in the second coach. They had gotten on the train at Shalyer's Station, some twelve miles from where we then were.

It was a grand surprise to Lucy to know that her cousins were on the train. They covered her pale cheeks with kisses; and all were surprised sure enough when in walked Tom. We did not know him at first, but he knew us. He was very saucy, and asked Mamie if she did not want a Christmas gift.

"Yes, indeed I do," said she.

"Well, reach in my pocket," said Tom abstractedly.

She reached in, of course, and drew out a large owl! She was very badly scared. It was jolly fun to us to see her so well scared.



"Why, cousins, did you all think of going to Uncle Jack's?" said Tom. "I thought I would be alone, and I did not want to go at all; but I am glad, so glad now, and to be with you, my dear cousins."

"I have lost my ring," said little Ethel. "Oh! what shall I do? It was the one dear mother gave me just before she died, and I would not have taken anything for it. Cousins Tom and Will [Will was my name], will you not hunt it for me?"

"Yes, of course," said I; and "I too" came stoutly from Tom.

We looked all around, under the seats and about our baggage, but without avail.

"Maybe you have it put away," said Lucy.

"No, I do not think that I have; have I, Mamie?" said Ethel.

"Yes; I think I saw you put it in Cousin Will's purse awhile ago."

"Yes, here it is," said I, knowing where it was all the time.

Ethel said: "You are a good boy, Will, but very forgetful."

I then made believe that I was going to steal the Irish woman's baby that was asleep over in the other corner.

"Will, do not do that," said Lucy; "for you know what mother said when she told us good-by."

"What was it, Lucy?" said Mamie. "Did she say for Will not to tease the baby?"

Then we all laughed. Lucy was confused, and turned pale, white, red in the face, for the passengers laughed too.

"Oh, no, Mamie; you know that she never said that,



but she did say, 'Be good children, and obey Uncle Jack,' and you know that he would not approve of this if he was here," said little sister.

All were now interested in Lucy and sorry that they had laughed at her, and several had started to speak to her and tell her to stand always for the right; but the whistle blew, apprising us that Ledgerwood was close at hand. We began grabbing our baggage and making ready to get off when the train should slacken its speed and stop.

"Has an accident happened?" asked Tom of the nearest trainman.

"Hush, Tom!" said Mamie. "You know accidents do not happen every time a train stops."

"Yes, my little man, a little girl's foot was crushed off," said the man in answer to Tom's inquiry.

"Oh, how sorry I am!" said Lucy and Ethel. "Let us go and help them if we can."

"No use," said a gruff voice; "you had better keep out of the way."

It was near Ledgerwood, and after seeing the little sufferer—who was not hurt so seriously after all, but only had her foot considerably bruised—we walked on to the station; and there was Uncle Jack, ready with his two-horse chaise to take us with him.

"My children, I am very glad to see you. How you have grown, Will!" said the old man, hugging each of us.

I swelled up like a toad at the words, for I was his favorite, and he seemed not to notice the others as much as he did me.



## CHAPTER II.

### OUR ARRIVAL AT UNCLE JACK'S.

WE got in the chaise behind two milk-white horses, and away we went. It did not take us long to get to Uncle Jack's.

Oh, how glad they were to see us! Everyone on the place had to kiss us, even the old black servant and the great spaniel dog—the latter preferable.

"How you have grown!" "You are just like your angel mother." "You look so sweet, I cannot help biting you; there!" All these remarks were made by Aunt Lydia, Uncle Jack's wife. "Come in, children. Are you not cold? Have a chair. Ah! come up to the fire, Tom; you look cold. Let me help you get your cloaks off, girls. Now, have a seat."

Well, after such a hearty welcome from Aunt Lydia we sat down near the fire, while Aunt Lydia shut the door and Uncle Jack built a larger fire.

"Where did you get him?" said Tom, whose keen, blue eyes had spied a young fox squirrel in a cage near us. "Did you catch him, Uncle Jack? He is just like my pet Charlie at home. Charlie! Is he not a fine fellow, Ethel?"

"Yes, indeed," came the soft reply; "such sharp eyes; and does he not look cunningly?"

"Uncle Jack caught him some time ago," said Aunt Lydia after getting a word wedged in ahead of Tom's busy tongue; but hers had not been stopped long. "He is awful mean, and I am going to turn him



loose some day. I told Jack to let him go yesterday, but he would not."

"No, I wouldn't," said Uncle Jack. "I couldn't stand to see the poor fellow freeze to death. Could you, Tom?"

"No, I would keep him. He will make a jolly pet. What's his name?"

"We haven't given him a name yet. What do you say would be a good name?"

"O, Uncle Jack, let's all give a name and put them on a slip of paper and draw, and the last one will be his name," said Lucy.

"Agreed," said I.

"All right," said Tom.

The papers were fixed and the drawing commenced. "Snow" was the first name; "Cute" was the second; "Funny" was the third; "Will" was the fourth; and "Spot" was the fifth. The squirrel's name was "Spot" from then on.

"Who named him?" said Aunt Lydia.

"I did," answered Ethel.

"Who gave the rest of the names?" asked Uncle Jack.

"I gave the first," said I; "I gave the second," said Lucy; "I gave the third," said Tom; and we all knew that Mamie gave the fourth.

About this time old Aunt Hannah, the colored cook, came in, and said, "*Supper is weady.*"

We repaired to the spacious kitchen and partook of a "square" meal of everything good, for Uncle Jack was rather an epicure.

After supper we retired to the neat parlor, where we talked and laughed until bedtime. Uncle Jack



got out the family Bible and had prayers, and sang a few good, old, soul-inspiring hymns. He also taught us our Sunday-school lesson, for it was Saturday night. We then went to bed. I slept with Tom. I mean I tried to sleep, but could not, for his busy tongue, until a very late hour.



## CHAPTER III,

### FIRST SUNDAY AT LEDGERWOOD.

WHEN I awoke the next morning I found the king of the heavens smiling sweetly at me from out the unshadowed window. I arose and hurriedly dressed and washed, then went to the parlor, where I found the rest of the household. We went to breakfast, after which Uncle Jack told us to prepare for Sunday school and church.

All were finally made ready, and away we went one mile to the Belmont Methodist Church. Many were the curious eyes that gazed upon us. The assembly sang that sweet hymn, "Nearer, my God, to thee," and prayer was offered by the Rev. Dr. Bone.

Uncle Jack was our teacher. We all had good lessons, on which we were much complimented.

After Sunday school we were invited to go to the spring by several young men and ladies of Ledgerwood to whom we were introduced. Mamie and two more scholars and I went to the spring; one of them was James Burch, the banker's son, and the other was Henrietta, the fair daughter of farmer Seaguards. I went with Miss Henrietta, and the other boy with Mamie. We had barely gotten there when we were joined by Tom, Lucy, Ethel, Lizzie Campbell, the daughter of Merchant Campbell, and Elias and Trumbull Bone, the two sons of Dr. Bone, pastor of the Belmont Church.



We had a delightful time at the spring, and I must confess that I was completely captivated by that little winsome fairy, Henrietta. I saw that it was a match at first sight.

The last bell told us that it was church-time; so we went in and took a front pew. The choir sang a familiar hymn, and we joined in the chorus. I never heard such rapturous music. Prayer was made by one of the laymen; then Dr. Bone arose and took his text, which was, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." As the sermon was printed in the Monday's daily paper, I will give it in full. Dr. Bone said:

"My sermon to-day will be a dish of P's. Hear ye the text again: 'Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.'

"That God loves us is evident, not only from the many declarations of his love in the Bible, but by every token. But the beloved apostle John calls our attention to the manner of his love. And when we think of him as the very embodiment of love, bestowing his love upon us, poor, sinful mortals, we are struck dumb with wonder and astonishment that he should love us at all; but when we come to contemplate the quality of his love and the manner in which he has loved this old world, we are lost in wonder and amazement.

"We desire to-day to speak of the manner of God's love under several heads, all of them beginning with the letter P. This will probably attract the attention



of the young folks, and we can get them to think of God's love and maybe they will love him.

*"First.* The first P that we will call your attention to, in speaking of the manner of God's love, is that it is a Peculiar love—there is nothing like it, nothing to compare with it. It stands out as the great wonder of the universe.

"It is natural for us to love our friends, but it is natural for God to love his enemies, and well enough to die for them. God's love is peculiar to himself. There is no being in all the universe that can love like he does. There is no language in the tongue of man or angel that can describe it. Even the Bible, which is but an expression of his love, fails to fully convey it to our finite minds. The great apostle Paul speaks of its breadth, length, and height, but comes to a halt there, and says it passeth knowledge.

"Jesus himself, in attempting to describe God's love, says that 'God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life.'

"We have our likes and our dislikes, but God is love; and all that keep him keep from loving anything else.

*"Second.* But God's love bestowed upon us is a Perfect love. As God is perfect, so is his love perfect.

"The only thing that will perfectly fill the aching void that is in each human breast is the perfect love of God. The only thing that will make us perfectly happy is God's love. 'Perfect love casts out all fear.' It calms all our fears, and allays all our grief, and soothes all our pain.



“Yes, our holy religion, which is simply the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost—it is the only thing that will make us perfectly happy here in this world of sorrow, and it will make us eternally happy. I like to think of God as a perfect being, his love as a perfect love. He fully forgives us. He thoroughly washes us. He abundantly pardons. The blood of Christ cleanses us from all unrighteousness. Yes, it is perfect salvation.

“Christ, a perfect Saviour, made a perfect satisfaction and oblation of himself for the sins of the whole world. A perfect Bible! A perfect heaven! Perfect love, unending, unceasing! Thank God for full and free salvation! While I am a poor, imperfect, sinful human being, Christ in due time died for the ungodly, and I am rescued from under the curse of a violated law, and perfectly redeemed and washed and sanctified by faith in the blood of Christ, fully and freely and perfectly pardoned. And not only this is so, but it is my privilege to go on to perfection, to be perfect even as my Father in heaven is perfect; that is, I can come to a full development of the grace of God, and fill my sphere in life.

“*Third.* The next P that I will consider is God’s Personal love. It is natural for us, away down here in this far-off world of sin, to think of God as being away off somewhere in unknown space; but not so. St. Paul says, ‘He is not far from everyone of us,’ and exhorts us to feel after him if haply we may find him. I believe that through the incarnation of Jesus Christ there is a reunion of God and man, and by faith in him we are all brought into personal contact with him.



“God is a Spirit, and seeketh such to worship him as do worship him in spirit and in truth. It is true that it is in a spiritual sense, but it is just as real as my love for my own child. Spiritual things are spiritually discerned, and therefore inexplicable. But the Holy Ghost, or Spirit, is a person, and everywhere present, and as a comforter abides with us forever. He comes in to us and sups with us and we with him. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirits that we are the children of God. Yes, God bestows his love in a personal manner. We have sweet communion with him and fellowship; yea, he takes us to his great heart of love and embraces us.

“Of course, those who do not have this personal experience do not know anything about it. It is easy for anyone to deny anything that he does not comprehend, but I challenge the world to come and try it. Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good! Talk about pardoning taking place in the mind of God! Why, it has been in his great mind always to pardon those who believe on his Son, but he communicates the fact to us by the person of the Holy Ghost.

“*Fourth.* The next P is that God’s is a Powerful love. And oh, what a power it has been! Like the burning rays of the sun, it has penetrated this old, dark, heathen world with such power and force that it has revolutionized nations and empires and kingdoms, and has held in check the power of darkness for all these ages, and will finally overcome every foe, and sweep over this entire world and on and on till it sweeps through eternity itself. The love of Christ constraineth us. It acts as a constraining



and retaining force. It is God's weapon that he proposes to conquer his foes with, and he imparts it to us to make us strong and fearless. It is the only instrument whereby we can overcome our enemies and bring them to our feet. Yes, there is a power and influence in this love that astounds this old world. Whenever the Church gets full of it, then sin begins to give way. When the gospel has it in it, sinners are cut to the heart. Love never faileth. We actually love our fellow-beings into anything. By loving our enemies we heap coals of fire on their heads. If we have this love we are full of power and strength, but if we have it not we are nothing, we are as sounding brass and tinkling cymbals; and how empty are our forms without it! Love hopeth all things, beareth all things, endureth all things. Love abideth forever. Faith ends in sight, hope ends in fruition, but love abideth forever. Oh, how wonderful! So high, that it reaches to the highest heaven; so deep as to reach to the very gates of Hades; as broad as the realm of God, and as everlasting and unending as eternity. The power that moves heaven to earth and shuts out hell and puts a limit to the devil; the power that makes us happy in death and carries us body and soul to heaven; the power that smothers hell and keeps it from bursting forth in fiery heat: oh, it is omnipotent! Glory to God, it is the power that enables us to subdue our passions and keep them in due bounds, and enables us to ward off the giant Satan. It draws me to Christ and to heaven, and lifts me up from this world. I know there is a power in it, for I have the victory.



“*Fifth.* The last P in the dish that I will call your attention to to-day is the Paternal love of God; and this is the sum and substance of the rest.

“God loves us in such a *peculiar, perfect, personal, powerful* manner as to make us his children. We are begotten of his love, and born of God, born of love, born from above, made heirs of God and joint-heirs with our Lord Jesus Christ. I am glad that God thus so graciously reveals himself to us. Our Father! The Father of our spirits. Why, my relation to him is like my relation to my earthly parents, and I approach him with the same confidence that a little child does its earthly parents, and tell him all my troubles and ask him for his love and for his Holy Spirit with the same assurance that he will bestow it as when my own child asks bread knowing I will give it. Thank God for his Fatherhood! Heaven is my eternal home, and God is my everlasting Father, and Jesus Christ is my elder brother; and I, with the good of all ages, am his child—I am his child by adoption, and through the resurrection of this body I will be restored fully to my Father’s house.

“All heaven is getting ready for me and you. Jesus, my elder brother, is preparing a place for me, and after awhile I will go shouting home to my mansion above.

I am so glad that our Father in heaven  
Tells of his love in the book he has given.  
Wonderful things in the Bible I see,  
This is the dearest, ‘Jesus loves me.’

“Oh, for this love let earth and heaven join in a song of thanksgiving with me. Oh, what love!



Greater love hath no man than this. God bestows it; that is, he gives it to us as a rich legacy, without money and without price, unmerited on our part. Oh, what can I give in return for such love? I must love him with all my soul, heart, and strength. Love is the fulfilling of the law. By the grace of God we are established to love him and fulfill his law. God help us to love him in such a manner as to be made his sons, and thereby be made Godlike, and then we can love everything that God loves.

“O, brethren, what a thought! Immortalized, and glorified, and beautified! The thought brings a holy inspiration, and in the language of the poet,

‘Bright scenes of glory strike my sense,  
And all my passions capture;  
Eternal beauties around me shine,  
Infusing warmest rapture.  
I dive in pleasures deep and full,  
In swelling waves of glory;  
I feel my Saviour in my soul,  
And groan to tell the story.’

“The text will be found in First John, third chapter, first verse. Amen.”

I sat entranced as I listened to this discourse from the learned Dr. Bone. He was the most genial man I ever saw, with a bright smile for all and a word of kindness for any in trouble. I learned to love him at first acquaintance, and I still love him. He was a tall, handsome man, with deep-blue eyes, auburn hair, and a voice of heavenly melody.

The sermon was plain old Methodist doctrine from the beginning to the end. Dr. Bone knew how to handle the subject and point the way of escape to



danger-fraught men. It was a grand sermon, and I still remember the truths spoken by that holy man, who was the means of saving at least one soul that day. I saw the way of my life, how I was prone to wander and do wrong. I said to myself: "This day will I quit evil forever."

The five friends went home with us for dinner; and such fun as we had I never will forget. After dinner we went to the soldiers' cemetery; and there, among the noble dead, I spoke the first words of love ever uttered by my lips—to the ear of Henrietta. It was, I say, a match at first sight, as you will see later.

We finally got home; and Uncle Jack and Aunt Lydia had a pleasant repast, which we hugely enjoyed. Then the boys and girls had to go to their homes. So this was how we spent the first Sunday at Ledgerwood.



## CHAPTER IV.

### THE FIRST STORY.

THE next day was a dreary, drizzly one. We children had to stay indoors all day. Lucy proposed that each of us write a short story and let Uncle Jack read it. We all agreed, and for the next two days we were busy. Then Uncle Jack read the following story:

#### "WANTED—A GIRL.

"Wanted—a good-looking girl, who can cook, and who understands housekeeping. Apply at once. Address John I., 4 Woodland St.

"The above advertisement appeared in the *Morning Sentinel*; and when this story commences the gentleman, John I., sat by a huge fire in his grate soliloquizing thus as he read his own lines in the 'want' column:

"Humph! I wonder if anyone will answer. It is nearly ten, and no one yet. Money spent for nothing. They will be fooled if they do come. None will think I want to marry. I ought to have put it in a matrimonial paper. No, I don't want to be deceived that way. Let them come, then I will get my ideal—a good, stout, gentle-natured woman. Ah, there's some one at the door, maybe an applicant. Come in, do,' said he rather abruptly.

"Good-morning, sir. Mr. I., I believe? My name is Lelia Wein.'

"Good-morning, Miss Wein; have a chair. My



name is I.; yes. You are an applicant for the position I offered, if I am not mistaken?’

“‘Yes, thank you, that is my business with you,’ said she.

“‘Well, I must ask you some questions before I hire you. Are you single?’

“‘Yes,’ said she doggedly.

“‘In good health?’ continued he.

“‘I enjoy good health.’

“‘I can well guess your age, but may I ask you?’

“‘Yes, sir; I am only nineteen.’

“‘Are your parents alive, both of them? Are you a good worker? Do you inherit a fortune? Tell me your life.’

“‘Well,’ said she, ‘both of my parents are alive, but are in feeble health; that is why I seek employment. I am counted as a very good worker. I have a very good education, a practical one. My name is mentioned in my rich uncle’s will and testament, and he is where we know not; and as to the rest of my surroundings and circumstances, they would not interest but tire you.’

“‘You are charming; I am pleased with you, but I must try you for a week before I can give you a definite answer. I will ask, What are your ambitions? Ah, excuse me for not asking questions right. I mean, how do you love, or could you love any man well enough to marry him if he made love at first sight? But do not take me for a lover yet, although I cannot help admiring you. Talk; I cannot.’

“She slightly blushed at his brusque remark; or we may say he was sincere; but she managed to call



forth enough courage to say: 'I had rather not express an opinion on the matrimonial subject. I could marry if the one proposing was like you; but pray, sir, what has that to do with the position?'

"'Ah, practically nothing; yet it may mean much. If you can attend to a room, I will call a servant and he will show you to room No. 5, upstairs; and don't leave it only at meal times, and to take a morning and evening ride or walk. Do you accept this proposition?'

"'Certainly,' said she.

"John called a servant and gave him the orders, and she left for her room. John watched the pretty retreating figure of the blonde lass with the feelings of a man who had suddenly fallen into that unknown state (to bachelors) of love.

"Lelia found her room to be a nicely furnished one. She thought something like this: 'What a kind man! He would make a good husband; but why do I let such thoughts enter my mind? He is very strict, but I don't see what I have to do; find out, I guess. I will try to please him. I hope I shall draw a good salary; he never said anything about it. Here is a palette, brushes, and easel: I will paint a fancy sketch, for I can, and I don't want to be idle.'

"So she commenced the task. The dinner bell stopped it before it was completed, and she retired to the dining room, where she met the charming Miss Osias Seay (an applicant too, but she thought her a relative). John I. had had a similar interview with her, and also had given her a week's trial. He did not like her appearance or manners as well as he did Lelia's. When he asked Osias the question con-



cerning love, she said: 'Oh, this is so sudden! Wait for my answer.' Of course John was stunned, but he could not drive her off.

"Dinner was over, and Lelia went to her room to finish her sketch. Osias went to her room, but she whiled away the evening in reading a book.

"That evening three more applicants made their appearance. The first was Jessie Lynn, a sullen, hot-tempered girl, with sandy hair, blue (egg-blue) eyes, and a harsh voice; and she could easily be summed up as a she-wolf. The next girl was Sophia Seirs, a high-minded, well-bred, too-modest girl, who would sit for hours at a time dumb as an oyster; and she was a terrible meddler and gossip. The third girl was Nina Lewis, a high-flyer, who had lost her position as a stage dancer for negligence of duty. She wanted to settle down to quiet life.

"John I. gave each a week's trial, and was favorably impressed with Lelia. At an early hour in the evening he invited her to take a drive with him. She started to refuse, but he begged so earnestly that she consented. A pleasant evening was spent this way.

"John admired Lelia; Lelia acknowledged down in the depths of her heart that she liked John I.; both could see that there was something that drew them together somehow. John slept better that night, and dreamed more new, sweet, soul-composing dreams than he ever did. Lelia, too, had a sound sleep, and dreamed only of the future. Morning came, and she still had nothing to do. John took another drive with her that morning, and another that evening. He was charmed; he found himself deeply in love,



and declared that she, and she only, would bless his home, and in a short time too; but it almost choked him to say anything on the subject. Lelia saw this, but with her keen instinct she let him woo for himself.

"The days passed. John showed his partiality to Lelia, and they took the rides regularly morning and evening. The week ended. John told Osias she could leave, and she left. She was too fast for such a man as John I. She tried to court him, and was jealous of Lelia, who had the favor of John. Jessie Lynn shared a fate similar to that of Osias; she would not suit in any respect; she left. Sophia Seirs and Nina Lewis also left. Only Lelia remained. She was the housekeeper for John I. She was charming. John took her for a ride, and managed to say his little premeditated speech of love. She shied the question; but when pressed, she murmured, 'Yes.'

"John was happy, but he felt sad that he had to discharge the four girls that morning; and he showed his appreciation of having won so fair a jewel, pressed his lips to the face of that jewel, and twining his arms around her waist drew her to his joy-beating heart.

"When they returned, a letter awaited Lelia. It bore a foreign postmark. She eagerly tore it open and read:

‘—— ITALY, —— —, 18—.

‘MISS LELIA WEIN: Your uncle is dead, and we find that you are his sole heir. You have a fortune in your hands of seventy-five thousand dollars. It is in money; no estate. Write and give information in regard to money. We join in wishing luck to you.

WILCOX & BROWN,  
Attorneys for David Wein, deceased.’



"A thrill of joy shot through her heart. She rushed to tell John. John said: 'You will not marry me now, will you? You are three times richer than I.'

"Say nothing of that, dear John. I can never repay you; my promise is still good.'

"We shall marry to-morrow; circumstances will not permit of anything else. Draw your chair closer,' said John.

"She drew closer; and now let us leave them happy, with John holding her small hand in his and her beautiful head lying on his shoulder.

"So John I. advertised for a wife and he got one, a good one."

"You did well, Lucy," said Uncle Jack. "That teaches you girls a lesson: always so live that no fault will be found with you."



## CHAPTER V.

### TOM'S STORY: THE FAIR CALIFORNIAN.

UNCLE JACK reached over on the table and got the next story. "Hello, Tom, here is one from you! You children are the smartest young folks in the land. We will see if you beat Lucy. I am going to give a dollar for the best one.

#### *"THE FAIR CALIFORNIAN."*

"In the spring of '49 I landed in that 'sunny country' where the chilling winds of winter never come. Yes, I landed without a cent, or much sense, either; but I never felt disappointed, for I soon found labor with a miner, near Sacramento.

"We had a small mine, and were kept busy trying to keep soul and body together; for the mine was poor.

"The miner was a good, jovial fellow named Frank Mason, who had plenty of sense and had seen better days. He had lived in an eastern state, and had married a pretty woman. When the gold fever struck him, he 'sold out' and 'struck out' for the 'wild west,' leaving friends and relatives, who said he ought not to go.

"He had one daughter named Maude, a bright-eyed lass of sixteen summers. She was my ideal—a pretty little figure, a mystic face, with a sweet mouth wreathed in smiles and showing two rows of



snow-white teeth. It was a fad with her to hold that pretty mouth half parted, so that when she spoke in her sweet, musical voice you could see the very sunshine of her soul. A proud head, well thrown back, added a luster to her charms. That head, which now so lowly lies, makes me deathly sick when I recall these sad yet pleasant memories. That head was crowned with the mad-colored hair, red, which flowed in a sparkling mass to the length of a yard behind. It was not the ugly red hair that looks granulated, sickly to one's taste—not that violent temper producing hair, but a red that verged to an auburn. She had her own way of fixing it, and as it hung flowing in a wavy mass behind, slightly brushed in front—a fit image for an artist's model—you could distinctly hear my heart beating. This was the way I first saw her.

“Her father and I worked at our claim (for we had gone into partnership) to the end of August, when things became desperate; food was scarce, and clothing not much better; sickness came, and my partner lay with a burning fever for many weeks. We had done without a doctor as long as we could, and at last, when the sickness seemed critical, I was sent twenty miles after a physician.

“It was the last of August, very sultry. I rode a little mustang. On and on I went. I grew faint and hungry, and at twelve o'clock I stopped beside a spring to rest, eat what little dinner I had—and there I went to sleep. I slept I know not how long; when I awoke I heard a slight noise to my right; I sat upright and looked in the direction the noise came from, when ‘w-h-i-z!’ went something near



my head: it was an arrow, but where did it come from? I hallooed very loudly; my horse started and madly plunged by me, going down the vale at a furious speed and surmounting the hillside—then all was quiet for several seconds. I grew more calm, but saw no way of escape; I might run into my enemies instead of escaping. A ‘bang!’ a ‘w-h-i-z!’ a bullet, an arrow by my side, and then I saw in the grass the forms of five Indians. I was in for it. What could I do? Give up? No, not I. Shoot my revolver? Yes. Well, I gave them five shots in rapid succession, and laid two bloody warriors low in death—when I found that my ammunition was out; I had it in a satchel on my horse, but he was gone. I must fly for my life. The Indians made a rush after me, on my first round, and were fast overtaking me. I ran for about two hundred yards, when I suddenly stopped—right on the brink of a mighty bluff which hung over a whirlpool of water. I must jump. What! jump to your death; jump on the rocks, perhaps; jump from an unknown height; jump into a seething caldron of boiling water (for the water was hot, I found out later); jump when you know it is certain death? Yes, I had better jump; I have some hope, some chance in jumping, none with the Indian’s bullet or arrow. Yes, I must jump; retreat is impossible. I had rather die by that means than by the Indians’ cruel torture, for they evidently wished to catch me alive. Yes, I will jump. Can I clear those ragged rocks? I will try. I rush backward for a few feet and prepare for my jump, the jump for life or death. I rush on, and am about to jump; it is with difficulty that I stop



myself, when I see a small opening in the earth. Into it I rush, just in time, for the Indians thought I had jumped, and they had fired a volley.

"It was dark. I struck a match, and found I was on the brink of a small bluff, four or five feet high. I jumped off, and landed safe on *terra firma*. I looked around and saw a small channel leaving my abode: into it I went—on, on, down, down, till at last I beheld a glimmering light; it was the blessed daylight. I plunged on, stumbling over fallen rocks, *débris* of every description, rubbish, trees, water, in water, on rocks, when at last I fell into—darkness again—into a hole. I struck a match and lit a fire, but I could not get out.

"‘Well, I can die here,’ I thought; ‘but it would have been better to have let the Indians kill me, or to have jumped off the bluff.’

"My fire flashed up, and I saw my way out of the hole that I had fallen into. I scrambled up its edge, and was nearing the top when my ‘holds’ came loose and I fell back. A shower of rocks preceded my fall, and I saw a shining mass at my feet. What was it? I held a large lump near the fire and examined it, and then I shouted for joy—it was the yellow metal, gold! Yes, I had found an El Dorado. I picked up as much of the ore as I could carry and again climbed the walls of my prison. After a long, tired time of it I reached the top, not repenting of my fall into the hole, and then proceeded to reach daylight, which I did in less than an hour.

"I found my satchel lying near the lake, and farther on lay my dead mustang, half in water, half out—my fate if I had jumped. My pony had started



down the vale, but turned back and fell off the bluff as if he had been shot—poor beast !

“I thought I would examine the place so I would know it. I looked up and saw my three enemies peeping down the bluff; they thought I had hid. I loaded my revolver, for I had found my satchel, and then, carefully taking aim, fired. A wild plunge and a dull thud—three men lay near me. What! Kill three at one shot? Why, no; I shot one, and he, reeling forward, caught the other two, and all fell at my feet—two dead, one by bullet, one by fall, and one alive. Must I kill him, or let him kill me? No, I would spare his life; and I did. I made him guide me to the place to which I wished to go, and when I reached it I put him in safe keeping.

“The doctor took me in his buggy, and we reached home late at night.

“Mr. Mason was better, and, after having medical aid, recovered in about two weeks.

“I sold my nuggets and saved the family from starvation.

“Maude and I soon began to feel a little more attraction for each other, and long summer hours were happily spent together without the knowledge of her parents. We went on with our courtship, and after a long struggle (on my part) we pledged to unite our hearts and lives.

“I was happy, but when I asked her father for her hand there was a denial. He never thought of such a thing; he never noticed anything more than friendship.

“‘No, no, you cannot have my darling now,’ he said.



"I argued, I pleaded, I begged, but in vain; he put me off.

" 'All will come right,' I thought; so I waited.

"One day I took my friend to my mine—the place where I escaped death, killed my enemies, and found my gold. He was in ecstasy when he saw it, and I made him my partner. Ought I to have done this? Yes, I think so; for he had done the same to me, and that would win him.

"We worked the mine for some time, and had good success; then we sold it to an English syndicate for a round million.

"Well, one day I told Mr. Mason that Maude and I would marry anyhow—it made no difference whether he said no or yes.

" 'You can have her, Mr. Will Hannon—just for friendship's sake, if nothing else. She was so young when you asked me for her the other time that I could not but refuse.'

"He talked as if she had gotten older in a few months.

" 'And you had nothing, you know,' said he.

"But I did have something, just the same.

" 'And I wanted my little dove to marry well off,' he continued; 'and—yes, you can have her, with my blessings,' said my old friend.

"The wedding came off, and we were happy. We (with my father-in-law and family) came here to Tennessee.

"My cousin, Earnest Hannon, soon got jealous of me, and fell in love with my pretty wife. He pleaded with her to leave me, but she was true. I never dreamed of this.



"Ten years passed, and one winter night as wife and I and little Jessie Maude sat by the fire, there came a 'bang,' a report, a bullet, and my wife lay mortally wounded! She told me all. Well, the fiend was mobbed, but I never recovered my full senses.

"It makes me mad to tell this; makes me insane to think of it, and deathly sick to recall the memory of my dear dead wife. My hair is white, you see, yet I am young—all because that villain robbed me of my best joy.

"Little Jessie Maude made a beautiful woman, just like her mother, and now she is my joy. I must close, as I dip my pen in my blood when telling this."

"Good, good, good! hurrah for you!" was the plaudit that greeted this story, and then came a mighty clapping of hands.

"That is good," said Uncle Jack; "it teaches such a good lesson: never despair, never give up. There is a way out of trouble, and if you take the right way you will get gold and success, as the hero of that story did."



## CHAPTER VI.

### THE BROKEN LILY—ETHEL'S STORY.

THE next story was from the pen of little Ethel, our most sincere Christian and prohibitionist. Uncle Jack read it, and of course it pleased him, as he was a good Christian.

#### *"THE BROKEN LILY."*

"Did you ever notice that pure, queenly plant as it rears its snow-white head above its green bosom, or gently nods a cooing welcome to the fascinating zephyr's breath or strengthening sun; or, again, on a pretty girl's dress front, adding not beauty to beauty, but luster to charms? Aye, I repeat, did you ever see that flower, the fit emblem of purity, innocence, and beauty, on or in a slender vase, and a fair, seemingly mystical figure looking down in its face and giving her own light to the lily?"

"A fair picture, a vivid imagination, not a passing, chimerical, but a realistic, image.

"The first time the poet met the fairy queen, Miss Beatrix Beauford—well, he saw not only the lily she wore, but the lily-complexioned face of its owner. That lily and its owner furnished the bard many a subject for prose and poetry. The poet—you shall know him—Mr. Roderick Depount, was a very genial fellow, with a peculiar manner and haughty speech, seemingly, yet not so when one fully knew him.

Fair lily, droop not your head,  
Or wither with the sun;  
Raise your head, live, be not dead;  
Let your mission be done,



the poet would cry; and she, the owner—oh, she would be rather encouraging. And the poet sang on his direful dirges and mournful odes interspersed with a glad song, a joyful poem, or a humorous critique.

“Well, the lily that she wore the first time he met her was pleaded for, but in vain. A grasp, a clutch, and a broken stem the lily had—a tortured face the owner and the lily had; a hard heart the rhymer had.

“The bard pursued his case, and fanned the spark that had been formed in his heart; it would brighten up, then flicker, go nearly out, but not quite—never rising to a flame, never going to ashes.

“She was only visiting in the town of Limerick, or I believe was spending the summer there, when the poet met her and fell a victim to her charms—a praying man to her beauty, and a beseeching singer of emotional songs or impassioned verses; and, alas! she departed.

“She left a vivid impression upon his mind, heart, and soul: his songs contained her praise, his poems pictured even herself, and after she was gone you could have found him in a small office working at his manuscripts untiringly. And she loved him more dearly than he loved her; but never did she ‘let on’ till she found that his love was pure, sincere, and devotedly hers.

“The crowning literary work of his youth had been finished, offered for publication, and rejected. He grew despondent, and sought relief in travel and new scenery, but these failed; then he resorted to strong drink, and became a mental wreck. He was in a distant country, without friends or money, or any-



thing—in the hands of strangers. In his desperation he resolved to end his troubles by suicide; but the manner of his self-destruction caused him to hesitate. Would shooting do? No; he thought too much of his brains to have them bespatter the ground. Would a razor do? would it end life quickly, instantly? ‘No,’ thought he, ‘I could not bear to hear my flesh grate or to feel the warm blood drop on me—to see such a sight and hear such a noise. No, not a razor.’ Hanging—would hanging do? Let us see; would a rope suffocate or strangle or choke? ‘Yes; by the laws of Heaven I shall not die that way—my eyes protruding from their sockets, my face distorted and disfigured; no, I cannot have it that way. If I am ugly here in life, I shall be no more of an ugly corpse than I was a man. No! I shall drown; that is the most pleasant mode of death I know of—“happy dreams under peaceful waters” [his own quotation]. Happy—ah! here I go; good-by!’ These were some of the unhappy man’s thoughts.

“‘Splash’ went the water; a man rises, sinks—once, twice—then a stout pull, a steady swim, and a brave dog, faithful to all, brought the sad, unconscious would-be victim of suicide to the bank; and he, good doggie, barked furiously.

“A lady walked the road, seeking flowers—a sweet, pale-faced lady who evidently had a great sorrow, a loss of relatives or friends, or a debauched lover, for she seemed sad. She kept saying to herself: ‘He is somewhere. Oh that I knew! And he drinks. I would reform him.’ Just then she heard her pet dog barking.



“ ‘Come here, Carlo. Carlo! Naughty doggie, come here. Let snakes alone!’

“ ‘Yelp, yelp,’ barked the dog, and the echo said, ‘Help, help!’

“ ‘Something is the matter, I fear; I must see. I will punish him if he is in trouble. Oh, to have my beautiful walk spoiled by a naughty dog! Come here, Carlo.’

“ But the dog came not. So, tripping lightly down the bank, she saw the man whom she had loved and worked for, and would have died for.

“ ‘My God!’ she cried. ‘Roderick, what is the matter? Help! help!’

“ She came to his side; he was still unconscious.

“ ‘O, Roderick! say something, one word. I have been looking for you, for I thought you were here at the hotel, but I didn’t expect to find you at this place. And here is some mail for you; it is marked ‘important,’ and is in my care; a special delivery stamp is on it. Say—thank God, you are alive!’

“ He sadly opened his eyes and said, ‘Is that you?—you?’ and shut them again.

“ She ran to a house near by and summoned medical aid, and he was restored. She handed him his mail, but he motioned her to read it to him. She complied. The poet’s work, once rejected, had been accepted, and an offer of ten thousand dollars made for it. He was carried to the house, and she answered his letters, and the bargain was made.

“ The poet grew better from the reception of the good news, and the beautiful face of Beatrix had come and had been seen. She told him all that had occurred with her since their last meeting: how sad



she had been because he did not write nor come; how she had heard of his defeated ambition; how he had yielded to the demon of strong drink, and how her heart was broken. But she was true to him, and still admired him, and would try to help him save himself.

"The poet thought of the fair lily he had snatched from her hand the first time they ever met; how much she now looked like that delicate flower which he had so ruthlessly grasped and crushed, and he the cause of her dejection.

" 'Be-Be-Be-Beatrix, come here; come closer—still nearer. Let me whisper in your ear. Forgive. I see it now: you brought me back name, fame, and fortune; you have been writing to the publisher—I know you have, you cannot deny it.'

"She nodded her forgiveness.

" 'Well, darling, thanks. I will never drink another drop from the intoxicating bowl. You surely know my wishes and wants now; only say yes. We will start for the metropolis to-morrow, if you will, and next month sail to Europe.'

"It is needless to say that they never took the European trip as single beings, for the wedding occurred very soon, and Beatrix Beauford became Beatrix Depount."

"There are many broken lilies, children, among both married and single women. Never wed a drunkard, girls; and, boys, never crush any lilies. Ethel did admirably well; she composed a beautiful story. The dram curse must be blotted out, and the boys and girls of our land should not tolerate it by any means," said Uncle Jack; and we all sanctioned his words.



## CHAPTER VII.

### MAMIE'S STORY: A FORTY YEARS' DANCE.

"GRANDPA, let me go to the dance," said Johnnie Earls to his grandfather, Tom Cade.

"Oh no, child; you cannot go. Your mother might not approve of it; she sent you here to go to school; and besides, you might dance as long as I did once, forty years, if I let you go," said he, with a smile.

"Well, grandpa, tell me about it; I will not want to go if you will. Forty years! Why, grandpa, that seems incredible. Tell me about it; I will not go to sleep," said Johnnie, for he was in the habit of going to sleep after having begged his grandfather for a story, or a history of some of his kinsfolk.

"It was forty years ago," commenced Mr. Cade, "that I went to a dance. I was young, just twenty-one years old. These feeble arms of mine were young then; my steps were not tottering as they are now; my eyes were bright, not impaired by age; I was buoyant, full of life, blithe, and a good stepper to fine music.

"I carried to the dance Tennessee May, an English girl of rare beauty and superb genius. I had been going to see her for three years. We loved each other, but felt a delicacy on the subject; and I was too bashful to propose, although I made up my mind to do so. She was too modest to hint about the matter, so we led a silent courtship, full of deep, inexpressible feeling.



"The ballroom was five hundred feet long. Large mirrors were fixed on the walls so that they reflected a beautiful picture to the dancers; and when one would offer to kiss his fair partner, a multitude of image-watchers stared mockingly at them. To a bashful lover like me this meant a warning, and my little lady dear escaped the embarrassing ordeal.

"The dance commenced; the music gently floated through the spacious, well-lit hall that was divided into five rooms, each one hundred feet long. I never got to waltz with Miss Tennessee until the night had well waned into the morning, for she was constantly surrounded by a throng begging her for the next dance. Finally I found she was not occupied, asked her hand for the next waltz and was accepted. The music began and we waltzed through the room several times.

"The exercise of dancing had warmed her blood, and a deep blush was on her cheek; indeed, I felt jealous of my 'future intended.' She tripped lightly, and as we neared the far end of the hall, she said: 'I wish I could waltz with you always, Tom; you shall be my partner from now on; you are so entertaining.'

" 'Let us dance for all time to come,' I said. 'Let us be off; it is late. You are so handsome that I ought to ask you a question: Will you join me in a dance that shall last until life is over?'

"She never said, 'This is so sudden,' or, 'Do you mean it?' but, 'I have longed for this time. I take your hint. Yes, we understand each other fully, and I accept your proposal with thanks.'

"I said: 'When, my darling? Now? God bless



you for accepting me! I am not worthy, but God knows my heart—I love you more than I do my own life. Let us leave now.’

“We waltzed out of the room into the street. Her enchanting voice, mingled with a gay, happy laugh, made divinest music; and we joyfully skipped on, for the ground was frozen hard, and there was nothing to impede our progress to the marriage altar.

“We arrived at the clergyman’s home and made him arise. The license was obtained and the ceremony performed. We then retired from the minister’s house and went to my bride’s home, where we met an irate father who declared war. I was on the defensive, but that did no good. The old man’s anger was at a fever heat. I saw that war could not be averted by truce, so we had a few words, and—I am no coward—I ran, but not very far; I then returned.

“The old man had relented somewhat when he comprehended how things stood, but he would not let us stay there, and he vowed that we should never enter his dwelling again.

“We then went to my boarding house, where I told the landlady of my marriage and introduced my wife to her.

“It has been forty years since then; but, my son, we have never missed a day that we do not dance. I do not mean shake our feet, but I mean that we are happy, and never quarrel. That is why I tell you this, for I always want you to be happy, gleeful, and never quarrel. Are you sleepy now? Are you glad that I did not let you go to the dance?”



"Grandpa, of course I am not sleepy. How could I be when you are so interesting and entertaining? I am glad I never attended the dance; but is that so that you told me? O, grandpa, how stupid I am not to know! It was grandma that you danced with. You are so clever to tell your truant grandchild such a good story of your past life; how can I thank you for it?' said Johnnie.

"By being a good boy. Here is a silver dollar for your not going to the dance. It is time that you were in bed. Kiss your grandmother and be off. When you are older you can go to all the dances—and marry, if you want to. Go now, for I have to write to your mother and tell her what a good boy you are, and I know she is proud of her boy. Now good-night," said Johnnie's grandfather.

"This will not miss the dollar far, I guess," said Uncle Jack. "You can get the lesson out of it yourself."



## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE LAST STORY: MY BROTHER JOE.

"I WONDER who will get the dollar," said Mamie. "We have all told a story but Cousin Will. I guess he will get the prize. Indeed, I like this. Do you all?"

"Of course we do," said Ethel.

"I never enjoyed myself better in writing mine and hearing the others read. Read the last, Uncle Jack," said Tom.

#### *"MY BROTHER JOE."*

"Joe was a handsome boy, six feet high, and nineteen years old when this story opens. He had large, brawny arms and a symmetrical body that was covered with a corpulent compound of modern delicacies; therefore he was considered very sweet by the girls when he was young, and now, twenty years later, his wife thinks the same. He had an extremely large head, well formed, lit with two fiery gray eyes that shone admiration of natural beauty and disdain of vulgarism. Bright ringlets of wavy brown curls decked that head of his, and a mouth fitly shaped, studded with two rows of pearl-luster enamel, welcomed everyone with a smile that was sure to win the esteem of all; and a non-aquiline nose imparted only beauty to his well-favored countenance.

"From his in fancy he had been a favorite of the feminine sex, and now the mistress of 'Ald Monte



Villa,' in El Paso, Texas, was won by Joe, our hero, before he was of age. He married pretty Daisy Sweet on his twentieth birthday. Joe was going to school at Maloe Eureka College, situated at Bradford, Kentucky, when he met her. It was one sultry summer Saturday morning as Joe and his roommate, Fred Swain (or Sween, as Fred called himself, although he was known as Swain), were walking through the beautiful woodland, they saw the girl that kindled a flame of love in their bosoms and put enmity between them.

"‘My!’ exclaimed Joe, ‘she’s a beauty! Stay back, Fred; I’m to be the first to meet the fairy, for I saw her first. Fool, stay back; have you no sense, or have you no mind? There!’ finished up Joe, after he had felled Fred to the earth with a blow from his fist.

"Fred had surely lost his mind, as Joe had said, for he had forgotten all manners, and would have rashly forced himself upon her presence had not Joe stopped him. Joe went on and politely introduced himself, and begged to be excused for intruding. She smiled her best, and then Fred came, looking angry, but not over-scrupulous, for Joe’s blow had roused his ire and dampened his feelings of admiration.

"Daisy had been gathering wild flowers, and they added a polish to her own personal charms. It was a joy to behold this shy maid; her great brown eyes, drooping, reflected her unrivaled beauty, and a slight blush on her rose-tinted cheek only caused a deadly hatred to spring up in these two friends’ hearts, and to sever the ties of friendship that had



bound them for twenty years, as she stood there in the mellow rays of the sun.

“They left the maid and returned to their rooms. Both dreamed of her that night, and also of the future. Next day was Sunday, and it is needless to say that the boys did not try to see the maid, for they did; but Fred ‘got left’: he stayed at home and planned revenge all that day. They were rivals from now on. Each tried to impress himself upon Miss Daisy, and distress one another. Each one sought her company, and fought for her kind favor with blows and hot words; but Joe won her promise before three months had passed. He was preferred over a dozen other young men. Pretty Daisy Sweet became Daisy Sharp (Joe’s wife) before the year was out; but he had a hard time in winning the queen that now presides over ‘Ald Monte Villa.’

“A queer duel between Joe and Fred Swain ended all opposition; a duel that none witnessed but the combatants. Nothing but a duel would satisfy Fred when he learned that Joe had won Daisy’s heart and hand. Joe was not slow in granting his wish. They retired to the same woods where they had first seen the maiden who had caused all this ill feeling, and there occurred the duel. The rules of dueling were obeyed, and when Joe said ‘Three,’ a ‘bang! bang!’ simultaneously followed; and when the smoke cleared away, Joe stood erect, looking triumphant, and Fred lay face foremost on the ground, seriously wounded. Joe was slightly wounded in the arm. He went to his rival and found him slowly bleeding to death, yet (I never would have thought it of Joe) he would not stanch the flow. Fred dreamily opened



his eyes, and feebly said: 'Forgive, Joe; forgive; save me! I was imprudent. If I die, remember me; if I live, forget me, for I see you hate—oh!'

"Joe left hurriedly, and went to Daisy's home. They married in October, and departed for Texas, and settled in El Paso, where they may be found to-day; for Joe said he never could bear to live where Fred Swain's piercing black eyes always stared at him, seeming to ask him for help, and then mocking him to his teeth. No, he could not dare to be haunted by the dead face of his rival, and see midnight visions of one whom he once regarded as a friend, but not as an enemy: so this was why he left.

"Joe prospered in his new home, 'the villa,' and before a year had passed his lovely wife gave him a beautiful daughter, whom they christened Nellie. Another year passed, and another, and so on until twenty happy years had rolled away. Four children blessed this happy union, and now their eldest daughter is to become the wife of Captain Sween in December.

• • • • •

"Fred Swain was two years younger than Joe, and of a richer family than Joe; and as he lay there in pain, both bodily and mental, he rued the day he was born; but when he thought of dying, he said: 'How foolish I am! I wronged Joe, I know I did; but oh, how I loved her, even at first sight! But, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Am I to die like a dog? I forgive all, but die I will not. I feel it, Joe and I will be friends some day; but the pain—oh!'

"He was found by a friend in a semi-conscious



state, and was taken where he could receive medical aid; and after a lingering illness of some months he was reported out of danger, and rapidly recovered, to the astonishment of his friends and relatives. He never told where, how, or anything about the duel. He joined the army, and soon gained prominence. Twenty years rolled by, yet he never married.

“He never heard of Joe, where he was or what he was doing. At last his regiment was ordered to the West, and while out there Fred concluded to see the country. He visited several states. On the 30th of May he received a letter from a friend in Houston, Texas, saying: ‘Come to see me.’ Well, as he could get off duty easily, he thought he would go to see him. The train was behind time at El Paso, and he had to stay over; but, as we shall see, he never regretted it. It was in the evening, and the next train would pass at nine o’clock that night, so he had plenty of time to see the town. He met a former schoolmate, and nothing would do him but that he should attend a masquerade party at Mr. Sharp’s.

“Fred called himself Sween, and told his friend that he had found a mistake in the family record (which was true), and therefore it was necessary that he change it.

“Fred did not know that he was going to the home of an enemy; and when he heard the name Sharp, he never thought it to be his old friend, or rival.

“Well, he went to the party; and, as luck would have it, Miss Nellie Sharp was his consort. She was only nineteen, and she was the picture of her mother and the image of her father, and as they



were both handsome, she could not be anything else than an ideal creature of beauty. Her beauty was not artificial, so-called beauty—the creation of cosmetics, superfluity of dress, hair, etc.—but a natural endowment, given by God himself. Fred begged her to remove her mask, but she would not for a long time. Fred never wore his at all.

“They were sitting on the veranda, and the gentle queen of night shed her silver rays on the unhidden faces of the two. Although they had never seen one another till just then (but had been together), they admired each other. Fred’s heart gave a great throb of adoration when he saw her face, and he felt that she was the only woman that was perfect to his eye; she was an ideal woman, he saw, and the only one he would care to win.

“Nellie appeared very attractive on that night, and more than once she caught herself admiring honest Fred Sween, and even learning to love him. Fred delighted her by telling of his adventures. She told Fred she knew nothing of her parents, for they would not inform her; but on her wedding night she heard all.

“Hours sped swiftly, and the joyous pastimes in which all had engaged came to an end.

“Fred met Mr. and Mrs. Sharp, but he saw no likeness to his friend and rival, or to his old sweetheart. At the hour for separation Fred left, but he made an engagement for the next afternoon.

“Nellie charmed her parents by telling them of the gallant, attractive, honest, and good-looking captain; and they were more than anxious to have their daughter keep his company. They had met as friends



of to-day, but neither of them suspected or recognized an old acquaintance—the two enemies of twenty years ago; yet the happiest evening for a number of years was the privilege of the captain.

“Of course Fred would not leave El Paso, the only city he cared for, and ‘Ald Monte Villa,’ the only house he cared for, and Nellie Sharp, the only girl he cared for; and she had already won the heart of her father’s rival, but he had not won her hand.

“A pleasant evening was spent by Fred next day with Nellie. A short courtship followed, and before two months had passed she was pledged to be his wife.

“It was a harder task for Fred to ask Mr. Sharp for Nellie than it was to ask her. After a long closeted interview, Fred emerged from Joe’s office with a radiant smile upon his face. What had the answer been? Guess? Pshaw! no use of guessing, for you may know it was ‘yes.’

“The papers announced the wedding for December the 10th, and on that day the nuptial knot was tied that bound the hearts of Fred Sween and Nellie Sharp into one heart forever. A larger crowd was never seen at a wedding; the ‘villa’ was literally alive with guests. That night, after all but the family had retired, Fred and Nellie were looking in the photograph album, when they came across the picture of Daisy Sweet.

“‘That is my mother when she was young,’ said Nellie.

“‘Ah! that is Daisy Sweet, not your mother,’ said Fred.

“‘Did you know her?’ said Joe.



“ ‘Did I know her?’ Oh! I was shot by Joe Sharp for trying to win her from him. Now I recognize you, Joe. Daisy, receive an old friend. I am no longer a rival, but, thank God, I’m a relative—your son-in-law. Forgive the past; shake hands,’ said Fred. And then Nellie knew all about her parents, for they conversed at large on that subject when all had forgiven and embraced each other.

“Now let us leave them happy and contented on Joe’s marriage night.”

I will leave it to the reader to find the lesson, and also to judge who received the prize that Uncle Jack offered.



## CHAPTER IX.

### THE SKATING HOUSE.

WE received invitations to attend the skater's annual exhibition, and accepted, as it had turned from a drizzling rain to a bleaching snow; then a cold north wind came which froze the water in the skating house to perfection.

It was Wednesday evening, and the exercises commenced at four o'clock. We all made ready to go. I went, and escorted Henrietta over to the skating house, which was half a mile from town. Of course sister Lucy and my cousins had escorts, the same ones that we met on the first Sunday at Ledgerwood. I thought Henrietta rather jovial and talkative on that night. She would not believe one thing I would say, but declared, "You do not mean it, Will."

We arrived rather late, and found the house partially crowded.

There was a prize offered to the most graceful, gallant, and fleetest couple. Henrietta and I tried for it. I had never been on ice much, and oh how many falls I did get! Cousin Mamie was an excellent and swift skater, and she and James Burch received the prize, which was a handsome cake with presents inside. The presents consisted of two fine gold rings, one for a gentleman and the other for a lady.

After we had skated until we were tired, we en-



tered the spacious reception hall and partook of refreshments.

The manager wanted some one to speak. I noticed that the crowd was dry, and thought I could enliven them. Well, sure enough, I was called upon to do so. I arose, and in a long, droll manner spoke a speech of my own manufacture:

“For sail—yes, what iz it for sail? Why, it iz a gud kwanitie of sparkling likwid fire that iz a sure death producer, a mind burner, a purse robber as well as a bread robber of a fading wife and starving orphans; a grave welcomer for u, grief for a father, a heart breaker for a muther and sister, a stab tu a bruther’s breast, a society demoralizer, a devil’s weapon, a suicide’s tool, insanity’s home, sickness’s friend, a country wrecker, a home ruiner, a demon’s agent, and gud for cool weather or a system strengthener; or, maybe, before this a burning brain, a scorching tung, a burnt, worn-out stumake, shaking limbs, cole feet, unsteady walk, protruding, blud-shotten eyes, a toper’s nose, and a fule in general. Well, this is gud. These are some effecks.

“‘Here, sir, that iz the very thing I want for mi sun; he kneads it,’ the father will say, after hearing of this wonderful tonic. The muther says: ‘Send me a kwart for mi dauter, she kneads a little for her stumake’s sake.’ And father and muther send for sum for theirselves. Of course that iz commendable, they act scentsible; it iz the very thing for a home, and a help as well as a curse to children. Quit having the stuff on ure tables.

“A thing that produces such effecks ought to be bought, pushed, and praised just to populate hades,



if nothing else, and it iz remarkably cheep—only fore dollars a gallon; u can get sum cheeper that will produce a gud effeck quicker, but it iz not so well tasted as the pure old Linkun county.

“‘I want sum ov it. Where can i git it?’ sum 1 says; ‘at the store?’ It luks like every store shud keep it.’ ‘U can git it only at a sallune or a polecat still,’ I wud anser. ‘I declare! can’t i git it only at them places? I want tu take mi gurl sum to make her lively, talkative, and witty. A grate many peple voat for it; of coarse it iz awl rite, for they are of the highest ranks, and the guvermint iz in favor with it.’ ‘No, sir; u cannot get it at no uther place az i no of. Az u say, it iz awl rite in every respeck. Church members (sum) take a morning dram, statesmen drink it, society does not ignore it, and all fules like it.

“‘Ef i wuz goin’ tu drink i wud want tu be hairlipt, so i wud never be nown to put a bottle tu mi lips.

“Ef i was a coin i wud get lost before i would go to a bartender’s pocket. That is strickly ’onest; and i am no bier-keg-headed, bottle-lipped, demijohn-eyed, ginpopped-legged Squash, ef i do grow on a vine and am still green.

“Sum men are like liquor bottles—nobody but the devil wants ’em, and they wud put out hiz fire. Ef you wus tu take a peep in 2 hiz home you wud find a hole lot of drunkards hung up by the seats of thare pants around the walls of hiz home, with a big fire under them. ‘Old Nick’ has to dry ’em before they will burn, they are so sappy and full of tonic; and them that are hung up are going like a steam



engine, whizzing and sputtering just like a green black gum log. The kind of kindling he wants iz a Christian that drinks a little. A gud shaving! a dry splinter! ha! ha!

“Ef you ever git in a hurry for eny shrouds, undertakers’ guds, a popular box with sum handles on it and a tin plate on it that says ‘At Rest,’ a box 6 by 3 feet (that is big enuff for eny fule), and u want tu ride in a glass karrage drawn by horses in mourning, very slowly, and then be carried in 2 a church and be praised and cried over by a preacher hu takes an occasional swig and pore relatives hu naturally feel like crying just for ceremony—u no they are glad u are gone—well, ef you want awl this, just git u a bottle and fill it up and let it run and soak in, and keep it up—don’t vomit it up, for that iz ugly—u will have ure wish granted, ure hopes found, ure prares answered, or my name iz not Joab Squash.” (Prolonged applause.)

The manager thanked me heartily. The crowd adjourned after offering me a token of appreciation in the shape of a beautiful gold-headed cane. I accepted it with a grateful heart, as I sorely needed it; for you know that I am a bit lame.

Well, Henrietta and I started. On the way I asked her how much she liked me.

“O, Will, I think much of you as a friend, but you are too overbearing to suit me. You don’t mean what you say. Why, you talk as if you and I had up, or down, a big case. The first time you were with me alone you spoke little sweet words into my ear, you know. I don’t believe you meant it; and now if you want to go with me, you will have to be



a little more cautious. But after a bit you can say—well, you know what I mean; can say, ‘Little darling,’ ‘Dove,’ or use some other such term.”

I was stunned. Had I been too fast? Surely I had, but not intentionally.

“Well, can I go with you to church Sunday night?” said I.

“Yes, I suppose so,” she replied.

We had reached the house before we knew it. I did not go in; for, besides a savage dog, there might be an irate father. So, after bidding her good-night, I went to Uncle Jack’s. I stumbled over two or three dogs on the way, for some boys ran me nearly to death with Roman candles. I got there at last and found Tom fast asleep.

Time swiftly speeds along. Sunday had come again, and found us once more at the church to hear a sermon by Dr. Bone. And then Sunday night.



## CHAPTER X.

### HENRIETTA.

Who was the pretty, fair blonde with demure blue eyes that could look through you, and with such roseate cheeks, each bearing a dimple? Was she this, the girl I thought she was, or was she a bewitching fairy who beguiled men and led them off to what seemed happiness, hope, and honor? Ah! happiness that melts as the waxen taper or tallow candle before the fire? Was she this? I still ask the question. Who can answer? Not I; I am sure I could not. Was she the mystery, yet unraveled, or was she the little pet, my bride to be?

Did she care for me? Doubting, I asked this question over and over to myself. I thought her an enigma. She was vain; she was chimerical; she was independent: all this I knew at first. Could I unpuzzle the question? I asked myself time and again. Who was she? I want some one to answer. Yes, she was the daughter of that honored, gray-haired old farmer; everybody knew that. She went neatly but not extravagantly dressed. She had a good character, and her manner was unassuming; she was kind and gentle as any lady; but what a countenance she had! I must test it. (I did, but she outlooked me.) She was liked and loved by all who knew her; she was well educated, and could play on any instrument, from a Jew's-harp to a cornet.



I was perplexed sure enough on Sunday evening when I received a note from this strange girl with whom I had fallen in love at first sight. I thought it ominous, and could not bear to read it; but, alas! I found it too true. It went straight as an arrow from a strong bow to my heart. It ran thus:

AT HOME, Sunday Evening, January 10, 18—.

MR. TOM CARTIER—*Dear Friend*: I hope you will not be offended in the least when you read the contents of this little note; but of course you know, and I know, that you have just been making these little engagements for fun, and I think it has gone far enough; so I wish to be released from the engagement I made last Wednesday night. Now, Tom, we have always been good friends, and I hope we will remain friends. We are more like kinsfolk than anything else, so we will just drop this little "flirtation" on your part. I've had no hand in it, and of course that is what it has been.

Please excuse this hurriedly written note; and hoping that you will not get angry, I remain, as ever,

Your friend, C.

What did she mean by that? I wondered why she addressed me by my first name; how came she to know it? By Cousin Mamie, perhaps. And she signed her name C. C. for what? I did not know, but soon found it out.

She had six or seven different *noms de plume*. C. was "Castolina," a character in a drama, and she bore the name because she had acted that character. "Jessie Fortune" was another assumed name of hers; it was also a character in some comedietta. "Browser" was another; I know not how she came to adopt it. "Angel" was a name given her by my aunt, father's sister Susien, who was teaching school at Ledgerwood. She and Henrietta were great cro-



nies. "It" was the laconic name given her by her father. I know not what for.

After I received that letter I sent her an answer, which was something like this:

LEDGERWOOD, January 13, 18—.

"CASTOLINA"—*Dear Friend*: Your important little missive to hand gave me a shock; sent the hot blood burning to my brain; left me trembling as if I were to be hanged. I did not at first believe you wrote it; but having found out that you did, I thought some silly person had made a lie about me, and told you. I had hints to that effect; but I thought, and still think, that you ought not to believe everything you hear. Trynel [a suitor of hers] and I are enough to run one crazy on the subject. I should think you would treat him as you have done me, if not worse.

Oh yes, I do not care for breaking these little "flirts"; they are "no good." But you talk as if I was funning [and I was] and you mean business. Well, I can mean business as well as you can. I think you should have let me go with you Sunday night, and then broken loose.

Ever since I knew you I have held you in profound respect, and so do now. I have worshiped the blessed ground that you have trod upon. You must not think me jesting, for I mean exactly what I say. Since I came here I have had an unusual yearning to be with you and talk with you. You surely did not expect me to be earnest-like right at the start, for I thought all flirtation began with fun. Cannot you have fun with me as well as with anyone else? Am I really too overbearing, or dogmatic, or sarcastic, or too emphatic, while you are as gentle as a lamb?

Yes, it does seem as if we were kinsfolk. I wish I was nearer kin to such as you. You are at Aunt Lydia's so much with Aunt Susien, it does seem that we are kin; but you must tell me what kin we seem to be—*sweethearts*, friends, or "two giddy young goslings" who run after the same crumb? I have always liked you as a friend, and wish it were so that I could like you as an admirer, for I do admire you above all other girls of this city. Do you not think so?



Don't let this breaking of engagements debar me from ever going with you any more? Of course I should not want to go all the time, but on some state occasions. Yes, if you want to mean business, mean it; for I would rather a girl would tell a boy the plain English than to hint around.

I was never angry with you, and never expect to be. I wish I could talk to you for awhile. Did you want to discard me for Trynel? I glory in getting to see him jilted (if you did that for him). Nonsense! You do not want to marry any more than I do (and I do, you think).

Say, how would it suit you for us just to write and not go together? I am not funning or jesting; no indeed, I am not. You said you had no part in it. I beg your pardon to say that you did. Your handsome face, your winning ways, enticing beauty, your lovely character, your social standing, all pointed out to me the fact that you were all in all. Perhaps you think I am too young to go with you, or you with me. You are not too old for me. I think we are about the same age—your being two years the older does not bother anybody. You may be older in experience than I am.

Henrietta, I want you always to remember me as a true friend. I wish I could say more than a friend. Ah, but you say we are like kinsfolk. Well, kinsfolk go with each other.

Pardon all that seems to you amiss in what I have said and done.

You friend as ever,

T. WILL CARTIER.

The very next day I received an answer; but I must explain before I let you read it.

When I first came to Ledgerwood I went with Henrietta's cousin, Talle Reeves. One night I asked Talle to let me go with her. She said that she had company, and I must excuse her. I then asked "Castolina," and she responded with a big "yes." About the time I got ready she perceived that she was "second choice," and would hardly go with me. I tried to explain, but I could not change her mind.



## CHAPTER XI.

### HER ANSWER AND ITS EFFECT.

WELL, that answer came. Henrietta had repented a little; at least I think she had. I had found out that she was a plain talker; but plain as it seemed, to save my life I could not make it out fully, though I think she told me the truth every time. Reader, if you have ever been in my fix, you can surely understand and sympathize with me. But that answer—here it is, *verbatim et literatim*:

AT HOME, Thursday Evening.

MR. T. WILL CARTIER: Have just received your letter, and must say I was as much surprised as you were to receive mine. I thought you would just let it pass on that way and say nothing else about it; but here you come with a great long letter that is enough to melt a heart of stone. The idea, Tom! I never thought of such a thing as our getting up a case, being sweethearts, or whatever else you want to call it. I said you seemed like kinsfolk to me because we had been together a great deal since you have been here, and your Aunt Susien was my companion, and we played and rollicked around and treated each other just like a brother and sister, or cousin; and of course folks do not treat their "beau" that way. I have always thought lots of you as a friend, and there is nothing in my power that I would not do for you as a friend. And I never thought of anything else than being a friend; but after you had gone with me a time or two, I thought it was just for fun. Even after you wrote that little "love letter" [poetry that I had sent her about "second choice"], I call it, I still thought the same; but when I got that last letter, it was too severe. I tried not to believe it, but still I could not see how anyone could write such and not mean it; and you said



you meant it. Of course I have to believe, but I hope it is not that way. If it is, or is not, it has to stop somewhere.

No, I did not break off the engagement with you for that fool Trynel. It makes me sick and tired to even think of the "ugly varmint," and you think I should treat him worse than I did you. Well, I tell you, he certainly got it worse, a long sight worse, than you or anybody else I ever had anything to do with. I told him many "little stories," and he will find it out before two weeks. I don't care for that "second choice" business at all; but I guess you thought it was very funny for me to be his "second choice." That was to be his last time anyhow. He thinks he is "the one," but he will come to his senses in a few days, and I think you will get over your little shock in a short time. You will awake to find it all a dream, and you will realize how silly you have been, and be sorry that you wrote to me.

I guess boys are like girls when they tell stories. When I tell one I try to look as innocent as I can, and make people believe it whether they want to or not. I think that is the way with you. Of course you do not mean it, although you said you did, and vowed that you worshiped the ground I trod on, and such as that, till you got me to believe it. And then it would be so funny: I truly hope it is that way, and think it is. If you think that you mean it, you will find out in a few days that you did not, that it is all imagination. "The heart that has truly loved never forgets," and you will find out that it was not true, genuine love. You will soon forget all about it, even if you do think it now; but I have my doubts about your thinking it.

Nobody has ever made me a believer yet; no one has ever awakened that little feeling you call love in my heart yet. I think very much of some boys as friends; I like to be with them and ride around and pass off the time, but that is as far as I have ever gone yet. And I hardly think you could fall so hopelessly in love all of a sudden. But, Tom, if you ever need a girl friend, if you ever see the time that I can help you in any way, I will be your friend, I will help you if it is in my power. It does not look reasonable now that you, a strong boy, will need help of me, a poor, frail-bodied, weak-minded girl. It may be that some time you will need my friendship,



but it is more apt to be that I will need yours, and if I ever do I hope I will find a friend in you. I am certainly your friend till death. I do not mind to occasionally write to you. So good-by. Your friend, "C."

How could I answer it? It was not so rough, but to the point. The effect on me is imaginable to the reader. You can see that this courtship was plain from alpha to omega. I must try to regain some confidence with her; so I wrote again.



## CHAPTER XII.

### MY ANSWER AND ITS EFFECT.

My answer to her last letter had the effect of making her feel a little insulted at my persistence in still pushing the case. It was like this:

LEDGERWOOD, January 25, 18—.

MISS HENRIETTA SEAGUARDS—*Kind Friend*: Your kind letter to hand. I was very glad to receive it. It brought such good tidings, and bore such a resemblance to the writer of it. Your letters are so sensible, so characteristic of friendship, hope, and fidelity. I notice that you are good at writing "angel-winged missives"; yes, I know why—because you are an "angel." You seem to think me imaginative about some things, fanciful or that I have none but roaming ideas. Nay, it is not so. Old Saturn would forget to let go his rays of light to other planets, and old Sol, as he sits on his throne of brightness and sends his beams of illumination that are wafted on ethereal wings of poised breath and seem to play hide-and-seek with the dead, would forget and stop if I were just to be fanciful or imaginative. I find your cure for "shocks" to be not effective. I have followed directions carefully, but without avail. I have waited, I have tried to forget, but I could not. In the daytime you haunt me, and at night, when I am asleep, visions come and remind me that there is one, and one only, ideal girl named Henrietta; and they whisper in my ear these words: "She is one who will not deceive you, or talk behind your back. If others have failed to make her a convert to the grand principles that Cupid, god of love, has given man and woman, and she has not heeded, that is no reason why you should be discouraged and give up all hope. She has already told you that her heart is not of stone; then maybe you by your wooing might strike the chord of her heart and melt all opposition.

Now, Henrietta, pardon these random thoughts. "Casto-



lina," tell me why it is that you and I never can agree on any subject that we have up for consideration? It is a mystery to me. It seems that we might agree on a few things at least. I thank you most cordially for giving me the chance of occasionally writing to you. Of course no one should know of this. We can still be true friends, without any public declarations or formalities, and write letters to each other once or twice a fortnight. Yes, if I were to "get up a case" with anyone, you would be my ideal choice. I would not for the world offer you any "gilded lies"; no, indeed. I know full well that "the heart that truly loves never forgets." I will never forget the blue-eyed bonnie maid who writes to me, and to whom I write. Even if I am cast on oceans wild or raging seas, or lost in jungles of ferocious beasts, or on lands where heartless men seek the life-blood of the unwary traveler, I would not forget thee, "Castolina"—no, never; no, never! I yet remember that "hope is a lover's staff," and if I lean on hope I will come out all right in the end. "O consistency! thou art a jewel"; and if I be consistent, then I will receive the reward of the faithful.

Now, if I make any mistakes or erroneous statements, correct them. I do not care for correction—no, not a bit—for life is full of mistakes. I need help every day, and your strong-minded, sensible letters help me to a marked degree. I have never thought that you do not mean what you say. Of course you mean every word for my good. I do not think I fell so "hopelessly" in whatever you call it—that affection which binds friendship and fidelity together.

I have had these identical thoughts for some time, but have had no chance to talk with you about them. Why do you want to stop before we are fairly started? You are always saying, "Some things will have to stop, they cannot run always." You surely think I am "dead gone"—"stuck" on you; but not quite, for I see it does not come of a sudden (every time), but by degrees. I wish you could believe some things I say. Why, my soul, I believe all you say that is of any good. I do wish you would do the same thing with me; but you say, "I am weak, weak-minded." Well, that may be so according to your judgment, but not to mine. You could not write such letters if it were so. You write so sensibly, so



honestly, that I cannot help believing; and when I am gloomy or discontented, I get your letters and read and ponder over their contents. I do not know which to talk to, your head or heart. If I talk to your wise little head, which is so full of knowledge and sense, I get beaten and outgeneraled every time. And your heart, you say, is impenetrable, and not so easily awakened as one would think. I am deeply impressed by your argument of self-defense. You are my friend, and I am yours. You should know, if you do not, that you have almost captivated your earnest Tom.

Why do you not answer the whys and wherefores of my illiterate epistles? I know they look shabby beside yours. I ask that you pardon these remarks of your admirer (or friend, if you want it to be such), and excuse all mistakes, either of omission or commission, and remember that I am your friend until death.

T. WILL CARTIER.



## CHAPTER XIII.

### WE AGREE TO CORRESPOND.

I FOUND that I could not go with her, so we concluded to correspond. Her answer to my last letter came promptly. I saw that she was tired of writing already, but I determined to push the business. Her answer was as follows:

AT HOME, Monday Morning.

TOM : I cannot say that it is a pleasure for me to answer your letter this morning, for it would not be true if I said it; but it is not because I don't wish to write to you, nor because I don't like to get your letters; but do you know that I really feel mean about it? I have told you the truth all along; I have not tried to deceive you; so I feel that I am clear. If you didn't stay here, right here where I see you every day, nothing would afford me more pleasure than writing you long letters, friendly and newsy, and receiving the same from you; but as it is I can't enjoy it very much. If you were an "old hand" at the business, and writing such letters to me, and I knew you were flirting, I could come up with you, I could carry you just as far as you could me; but that is something I don't follow unless somebody takes the lead, and then I follow pretty well—well enough to keep up and try my best to get ahead; but one as young and as innocent as you are I can't follow, even if you do take the lead—as you have done, although you still deny it. And you can't forget it. I'm thinking you didn't try very hard if you had anything to forget. That "if" always comes in: remember, if I should happen to forget to put it in.

You see I still doubt, and still hope it will turn out that way. You'll finally own up, I think. You'll get tired of telling stories. You know it's wrong, "and I don't tell them." It's so strange that you think it has not been very sudden, when you didn't think of such a thing until my cousin "went



back" on you. I guess she did. It looks very much like that anyway. I think it came very suddenly myself, after you found that somebody else had to be "second choice," that you had made a miserable failure at first. But you say "second choice" is better than the first. I care not for that at all. I feel highly honored to be made "second choice" by you, and by Trynel too, if he fixes it up as you do. How would the third choice be? My friend, Delia Dork, says she is "struck" on you, and wonders if it will do her any good.

I hope you have come to yourself by this time, and can see your way (but I'm so sleepy I can't see mine this morning), so I'll leave you to ponder over this good, "angelic" letter—ha! ha!

Your friend, the same yesterday and to-morrow, not changed the least.

"JESSIE FORTUNE."

To this I made the following answer:

*Dear Friend:* Your welcome letter to hand. Glad indeed to hear from you. Glad also to know you were not tired of receiving my illiterate yet humble letters. Yes, it might seem best to receive letters from one afar off; but then I never get to talk with you, hardly ever see you, and what could I do but write to you? You are a consoling friend of friends.

You write as if I tried to "get up a case" with Z.; but alas! I knew when I was going with her that she was under obligations to no other than Tom Bee. Of course I went only as an escort, not as a companion, with all friendly regard to her. I have no ill feeling against her. I have had an eye on you; yes, I have often cast a "sheep's eye" toward you; but the thought of going with her had never occurred to me until that blessed time that I went. I had heard some boys say that you would not notice such as me, and that you were vain and self-conceited; but a friend told me to fear no harm, for you were the most social and the wisest girl of the town, if you did cut up high capers sometimes. He also said he thought you had quit giving boys the "sack"—"getting left," as some call it. I took him at his word, and found it not only partly but wholly true. You are social, friendly, and a gallant little heroine of whom anybody ought to be proud of even getting a chance to write to.

I saw Trynel at Dublorston Sunday night.



I am beginning to write poetry again. I send you a copy of a piece or two. But do not take them to heart, for poetry is not always true: it may have a true basis, but very soon drifts out on the sea of imagination; yet some poetry is realistic, charming, and beneficial to those who like it; but the few verses that I compose are written not to be glossy, flowery, nor do they lead to a course of progression, hope, or happiness—nothing but foolishness, no honor at all. Perhaps you may believe much of it, but I know nobody else will. You can take it the best you can, sweet or sour, hot or cold, wet or dry. (I mean just what I write, and want you to do the same.) Will you not, "Castolina," my dearest friend? Of course you will.

Now, "Castolina," you know me, I think. I am glad that "second choice" made the change (if it did; I doubt it, but you claim it such). I have frequently told you why you were "second choice" that time, and see no need of further explanation—do you?—so let it stand until doom shall be no more, and fate shall call no more her blessed pets of forgotten days of love; let it stand until the fiery terrors of hades shall not intimidate or horrify man. Delia can talk about it as much as she pleases, for she doesn't mean what she says, I suppose.

Now, don't get weary at my long writing or ignorance. You still doubt and fear as to my stability. I do not know how I can convince you otherwise than by showing myself exemplary to you as a friend, and modest as all young folk should be; for I have said "I mean it" enough, I think. Why doubt you, my fair-eyed, lovely friend? for you know I didn't "fib" under such circumstances. I hope I may always prove true and trustworthy to any lady friend, especially to you anyhow. I know you are true, for blue is the emblem of faithfulness and truth.

I will close, and hope to receive an early reply. I remain  
your faithful friend,

T. WILL CARTIER.

This was my last regular letter, for we "got mad" soon after. In the next chapters I will tell you all about that quarrel, if you wish to hear it.



## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE QUARREL.

SOON after I wrote her the last letter I sent her a card asking her company to the "speaking contest." She did not answer it or my letter. I then thought to myself, I'll bring her to bay if I have to make her mad. I then wrote her another card, because the "speaking contest" did not come off. I thought she knew it, and that was reason enough to her instead of answering the former card. No answer! I grew mad; I was in a revengeful spirit. I was going to hear from her. I became desperate. I sat down (still mad) and wrote thus:

CITY, March 1, 18—.

"CASTOLINA" SEAGUARDS: You have played your part shrewdly indeed. I do not care about how high you think you are carrying me; no. You have not put me to the ceiling yet, but you think you have. I do not care what you do, you little witch. You could outgeneral a lobbyist, outwit a lawyer, or outcheat a merchant, and you think you have "tumbled" me, but you are sadly mistaken. I think I have put you in a do-nothing, can't-or-won't state.

Which are you, a bewitching fairy, or a blonde, blue-eyed, gay, self-possessed, undaunted, never-failing, little, arrogant, haughty girl of this city? You have treated me with contempt. I now quit you for the present, for I can see that you could carry me to the end of "nowhere." I only beseech you to be my friend, but of course you will not. You were afraid that I would put you in a place where you could not say "yea" or "nay." Now believe me (but you will not; you never do), I quit for the present, and wait for you to come to your senses



on this matter, if you have any; anyway you have not used them with judgment, or in a friendly, social manner, as you should.

If I were a lawyer I would rather have a treacherous Sioux for a client than you, or some other would-be smart girls of this place. By the way, some of the girls hereabout are really good, and treat a boy as he should be treated. You are aware that I am not angry, but sorely vexed at your wily ways of treating me.

Take this as you can or will, for I close with a farewell to you. Always a friend to "Angel," and hope she is such to me.

Yours as ever,

T. WILL CARTIER.

Of course such as that would make her write. She came at me with a great, scary letter. I knew she was enraged. I dreaded to break open the letter. I feared that my doom was sealed, all my hopes blasted, and that our courtship was ended, or dormant for many months to come. Yes, she would have to forget before I could go into her presence again. As I held the little flowery envelope in my hand my head began to whirl around, my heart to palpitate hurriedly, and the blood in my veins rose so swiftly that the marrow of my bones seemed to be cooking! Could I open the letter? I would try. With trembling hand I unsealed it, and found that it ran not as former letters, but thus:

AT HOME, March 4, 18—.

MR. T. WILL CARTIER: I received your missive a few days ago, and I must say I never was so well amused by a letter. The idea of your thinking that I have been trying to "carry you so high," when I have been talking plain English all the while! If I had been trying to get you "away up yonder," I would have taken a different step altogether. No, indeed, I do not think I have "tumbled" you either; if I had to "tumble" anybody, I would get one that was not so "ignorant on the subject." I think it is shameful for you to talk to me in any such way, when I told you, as plainly as I could write, how we



stood; but it went in at one ear and out at the other, just like everything else you have received from me in the past month. It seems that you have changed your opinion of me. For awhile you could not say anything too good about me—made me think I was perfect in all things; now you cannot say anything bad enough about me.

And you have decided to quit me for the present. Did you know that I quit several days ago? But I didn't quit because I had carried you far enough. Remember, you quit to let me come to my senses, "if I had any." I did not quit for that purpose either, but I quit simply because I found you did not have any senses to come to. "I only beseech you to be my friend"—ha! ha! You surely have lost what little thimbleful of sense you did have. You talk as though "friendship" had never been mentioned between us, when that has been the subject of every letter I wrote you. I was not afraid that you would get me to a place where I could not say "yea" or "nay" either. I have never been to that place yet, and do not expect ever to be led there by a silly schoolboy. I can say *yes!* YES!! YES!!! when it is in the right place; and when the time comes to say *no*, I can say it if I want to—if I do not want to, I keep it back till I get ready to say it.

I should think you are the one who has not used good common sense. I talked plainly from the beginning. What else could I do? If you had used good sense when I did not answer your first card, that would have been the last of it; but instead of letting it pass, you have to write a letter and then another card, and when I didn't answer either you sent me another letter that would scare any girl out of her senses, if nothing else would. But you think I haven't any, and I do not claim to have very much, or I would have treated your last letter as I did your first.

Now, Tom, if you see at all, you surely can see that you make a bad matter worse at every trial. In the first place, we both would have been just as well off, if not better, if this thing had never come up; but as it is, it started. It would have been best if it had stopped when I broke the engagement on that Sunday night, and sent you a note that had "such a terrible effect." But to make it worse, you went on and on till you sent a card for me to go to the "speaking contest." If you



had stopped even there it would have been a good idea, but you did not. This brings us to the card yesterday. You did not stop there, so we stand where we are to-day.

I found several days ago that "the least said is the soonest mended." So I think I have got a little more sense than you have, after all. It seems that you have not learned that yet, and just keep going; but you have gone all the way by yourself. I have talked about as plainly as you did without using any rough language.

You told me to take your letter as best I could. I took it just as I would if it had been our dog barking at me. I hope that you will take what I have said as lightly.

Your friend, (8) or H.

Could I answer such a letter as that? I saw she labored under the impression that I was really wicked. Of course I could not stand that, but I took the rest of her letter sorrowfully. So next morning at school—for I had started only a month before—I wrote her an answer, a part of which I quote:

I am about half crazy to-day. I have reasons for being so, haven't I? You know why. You should know that I am only "funning," and have tried your mettle. You get mad at anything. Now, little "Angel," I think as much of you as I ever did. Do you so regard me?

Your own friend, T. W. CARTIER.

I would like to have seen her when she read it; but I did not answer it as I wished to do, for I was in school and had no time. I wondered if she acted as I did when I received her letter: doubtless she did. She was not far enough gone to refuse to answer it.

I could not study at school for thinking about her. At dinner I went to sleep, when I was suddenly awakened to find my friend Jennie Fowler with a letter for me. I knew that it was from Henrietta. The letter looked as if it had fared pretty roughly. Great teardrop stains were on each sheet, and bore



evidence that the writer of it had indulged in a good deal of weeping; but she wrote a very bold letter, thus:

AT HOME, Friday.

Well, Tom, our little drama is over; the curtains are going to fall, and you are no better off than you were at the start; neither am I. You were just trying me, were you, to see how easy I would get mad? But you are badly out of it, Thomas, when you think I got mad. I have not had any notion of getting mad. You put yourself to great trouble for nothing, and spent your time in writing silly letters when you ought to have been studying your lessons; but of course that is nothing to me. As for your harsh words, I have nothing more to say. Things are very easily smoothed over sometimes; but I want you to understand plainly and distinctly that *I am not mad*, nor have I been mad. I would just as soon think of getting mad at one of my brothers for such a scrape as we have gotten into, and would just as soon have been swinging one of them for a "beau" as *you*; but "I am not mad." I have to tell you that occasionally, or I fear you will not believe it. I think you are the one that got mad and tried to smooth things over; but that is all right. I think you are a "good little boy," but the next time you want to get up a flirtation I cannot say whether you will know where to go or not, but you will know where not to go. That is what "got" you so badly. I knew all along how things would end. I do not think I am very sharp, but I was sharp enough not to let you get the best of the fight—ha! ha! You see I have traveled that road before. I have been thrown sky-high a few times in life—ha! ha!—while you are just starting on your journey. But a little advice to you, Tom: the next line you throw, let it be toward somebody who has never tried a bite at the hook (flirtation). Now, I am not mad, remember.

You were trying my mettle, were you? I think I can stand several more such trials. I find that I held my own pretty well this time—ha! ha! Of course I think just as much of you as I ever did—and a little more, since I found that you thought enough of me to want to know so much about me as to give me such a "trial."

Always your friend,

HENRIETTA,



## CHAPTER XV.

### THE QUARREL (CONTINUED).

I KNEW we had quit, but we had to wind up our business, close out partnership. I did not know how, but as this was my first experience at ending a courtship quarrel, I thought the next thing for me to do was to ask for my letters. They were harder to get than I imagined. I wrote for them, and said I thought that she was "mad," but was glad to find her otherwise, and that we would get up a case of flirtation or courtship, but she wouldn't consent. I wrote further, and said:

"Castolina," will you please send me the letters that I have written to you, if you have not destroyed them? I am not a bit *mad* at you, and love you as never before. I guess all this has brought some good; at least I have learned a lesson. You gave me the first lesson, but, like the maxim, "United we stand, divided we fall," we never did much, did we?

I just think you are the nicest and the sweetest girl in town. If you do not want to send those letters, I do not care a jot. Perhaps you want them for mementoes, do you not? Ha! ha! I will not give a reason why I want them.

She answered that letter, but did not send the others. I did not want them to be in her hands. Would she not send them? She only wrote and told me she was not "mad"; but I presume you want to read it all, so here it is:

AT HOME, Thursday Evening.

MR. T. WILL CARTIER: I have just returned home from "calling," and found your missive awaiting an early reply.



The idea of my being mad! No, indeed, I am not mad; have not had anything to get mad about. I was afraid you had some such thoughts; but dismiss them at once, for *I am not mad*.

Yours,

HENRIETTA.

Pshaw! she never said a word about sending them. I wrote her and told her I was going to have either the letters or her. You may guess she answered that in a jiffy; but the little witch, or whatever she was, never sent them at that time. I thought that she had burned them, but her letter (or note) explained all, as you will see:

Tom: Certainly you shall have your letters, all that I haven't burned. I burned one or two that made me so sick ["love"]. Now I want to know what you are going to do with mine. I am not ashamed of them. I guess you are ashamed of yours—that is why you want them; but I do not want them, or at least "I am not caring." I want to know what is going to become of mine.

Truly,

(8)

(8) for H., and H. for Henrietta, and Henrietta for me, I guess. I then gave her my reasons for wanting my letters, but she did not send them. I told her I wanted them. She said: "Send mine, and I will send yours, but not before." So I had to pack her letters and send them. And then I got mine with a little note attached to them. Of course a woman will have the last word, and I laughed while reading the note. Maybe you will laugh too:

Tom: Here are your "precious little letters," all I have. I burned two that made me so sick I could not bear the sight of them again. You must think I am a perfect idiot when you suppose I did not know you were merely joking about the letters. I am willing for all the world to see what I write to you or anybody else. I will send your letters without adding anything at all to them, or rubbing out what you have written. I hope you learned a lesson you will never forget.

"JESSIE FORTUNE."



I received the above on the day school was out. When I sent her letters I rubbed out words and put others in their place.

About two weeks after this, on Wednesday evening, I sent her a circular announcing an ice-cream supper to be held one week from then. A paragraph in the circular read: "A nice set of furniture will be given to the couple marrying at the ice-cream supper." I inclosed that circular, after writing at the bottom: "Here is your chance, 'Castolina'; I will take you if you want to go. Yours, as ever, C." I then got an office boy to print this address on the envelope: "Miss 'Castolina' Seaguards, at home feeding the chickens." You may guess she was furious. I only did it for a joke, and did not sign my name to it, but she sent it back to me anyway. She said she was mad. I could not help it, for I wanted to have some fun. That was the first time she owned up to being mad; but you do not blame me, I am sure.



## CHAPTER XVI.

### DECORATION DAY.

WE were all very much surprised on the evening before Decoration Day, when my father, mother, and little brothers and sisters drove up to Uncle Jack's house. It had been five months since we parted, and of course I was proud to see them.

Pa was an old soldier, and had come to the decoration of the graves of his brave comrades who had fought and died for the Union. Besides, it was a regular union day for my father and his brother and sisters. There were four of them left—my father (Abraham Cartier), Uncle Jack Cartier, Aunt Alice Jones (Tom's mother), and Aunt Susien Cartier, who was unmarried. Three of the brothers had fallen in the struggle for the nation's life.

The eight o'clock train brought my kinsfolk with their families. Such a meeting! Everybody talking at once. We all went to bed early, because we needed rest.

Decoration Day, the thirtieth of May, with its sacred memories of our beloved dead, came and passed.

Our kinspeople stayed only a week. Tom was going home to spend the vacation. How we would miss him! He was the most jovial, friendly, and talkative one of us five. But he would come back to the fall session of school; so he would be gone only six weeks.

That one week passed rapidly by, and our good



relatives were gone almost before we knew it. They went as silently as they had come, and they carried Tom with them. I missed him more than anyone else did, for I was with him nearly all the time and slept with him.

One thing I knew: father stayed long enough to find out that I had been having a good time with the girls, and particularly with one—the daughter of his best friend, no other than Henrietta.

My father had lived at Ledgerwood when he was a boy, and the old farmer was his counselor when a wandering youth, his stay in time of trouble, and his adviser when he had gotten to be a minister of the gospel; but it was the first time I had ever been to Ledgerwood.

Yes, my father had found out that I had written several letters to Henrietta, and had played a very rough joke on her, and that she was offended: so he went to her and politely said: “When you get a letter, note, or any writing from Will, burn it.” She asked how he had come to know of the affair. He told her that some one had informed him all about it. She thought it was I, but it wasn’t. I soon ascertained that father had seen her, and I also learned what he said; so I wrote her this apology:

“CASTOLINA”: I did wrong. I sent you a very rough joke, but I only did it for fun. Will you not forgive? I want you to pardon all my shortcomings and evil doings. I am conscience-stricken. I know I did wrong in talking about you, showing your letters, and then joking you so severely. Now, Henrietta, will you not forgive me? I cannot rest until you do. I am your friend; you know it, “Castolina.” I love you, and I was only joking. Say, will you not forgive me, an erring boy that I am? Surely you will. I think you did me wrong,



but I forgive you without your asking it. Will you do that? Now, "Castolina," do answer this with your pardon.

I remain,

WILL.

She did not forgive me—at least she did not write an answer; but I think she did relent, for she looked as if she did when she came to Uncle Jack's a few days after. I could not get a chance to ask her anything. If I had had a chance I would have brought her to bay and made her talk; but I guess she took my father at his word, and my ill-fated apology went for naught. I did not take this neglect in good part. For a long time I sought a chance to talk with her, but she was too sly for me, and eluded every snare I laid for her.

I had made a miserable failure in my first attempt at courtship; but that was not to be my last trial for her. Yes, I resolved to try again. I liked to overcome opposition, and I now had a fair field before me.



## CHAPTER XVII.

### HOW SHALL I OVERCOME OPPOSITION?

DID I have opposition? Yes; but how? My parents objected to my going with girls; they said I was too young. I do not know whether Henrietta's parents were opposed to her associating with me or not; but I knew that she liked me as a friend, if not as a lover. Ah, then! I would have to show her that I was somebody, and could make something out of myself. But the greatest of my opposers was a "dark horse"—my rival. Did I know that there was another in the race? Who was he? I must find out; so I kept watch, and saw Glypse Warnerk go to her house.

I had found my rival. I knew him; not personally, but by character. He was a drunkard, so people said, and had many other failings detrimental to a lover. Had Henrietta known all this she probably would not have declined my attentions, or we would not have broken off so quickly; but she did not know it. I thought it was my duty to tell her all about it, but I never got a chance to do more than hint occasionally.

How should I manage the great opposition that confronted me? Would I fight? No, a thousand times no! I would just let it pass without doing anything.

It was now the last of June. Thursday evening had found me pondering this question of opposition. I had been asleep, when the rumbling of wheels



awoke me to find that Cousin Tom and Aunt Susien had come back. How happy I was to greet them!

Henrietta found that Aunt Susien had arrived, and hurried over to my house (Uncle Jack's) as fast as she could. Aunt Susien had been gone only three or four weeks, but Henrietta was delighted to see her.

"Castolina" avoided me shyly at first, but her timidity soon wore off, and I thought she was the prettiest and sweetest thing I ever saw. She and Aunt Susien took a horseback ride a few evenings after Susien came. I saw them: both looked very stylish.

"Castolina" wore a pink Swiss waist, with a skirt that matched; gray and pink complemented each other nicely: her gray canton flannel skirt just suited her pink waist. She looked very handsome. Her rosy cheeks, her fair complexion, her luxuriant growth of auburn hair, her model form, and her sweet little words, all pointed out the fact that I could not afford to lose her. I was young; would that hinder? I thought, no. I had entered my nineteenth year; that was old enough to start, I thought. Well, maybe it was.

We will have to wait and see how it turns out. I knew she had forgiven me; not in words, but her actions spoke louder than words. I loved her, and wanted her to know it. I had told her of it before, but she thought I did not mean it, and was only flirting. I would tell her, and all opposition on her part would cease at once; but the incident of a runaway horse put us closer together.



There was to be a prize oratorical contest between six young men and women of Ledgerwood, and the same number from Thompson's College. They were to meet on halfway ground and contest for four prizes and a banner. I had arranged to go in an old wagon.

The day of the speaking was Saturday, July 7. A large crowd was going from Ledgerwood. Susien and Henrietta, after failing to get away, came to me and persuaded me to work Uncle Jack's horse to the buggy of Henrietta's father. Well, after some hesitation, I consented to take them. We were to start a little after an early dinner. I had the horse harnessed and hitched long before the time. We reached the halfway ground—the place of the speaking, Mt. Siven—very early. It was the first time either of us had ever been there. We were an hour too soon; so we took a little stroll, and captured some fine red June apples out of an orchard. When we reached the church it was time to commence. We took a seat and heard, alternately, one of Ledgerwood's speakers, then one of Thompson's College, until we were tired. I had "my name up" as a speaker, and when the contestants had finished, and the judges had retired to make their decision, I was called upon to speak. I accordingly made a humorous speech, and all had a big laugh.

The judges then came in and awarded the prize to Ledgerwood, and the banner to Thompson's College. The banner was a rich cream silk, with a beautiful motto on it; it was a beauty, and worthy of all admiration.

Well, we started home, and were going at a brisk



rate down a steep declivity which extended to the river's edge, when Henrietta threw her arms around my neck and exclaimed, "For heaven's sake, darling, hold the horse!" I noticed that she was frightened. It soon commenced to rain, and I put up the storm robe and side curtains. She said that I was the first boy she ever called darling, and that it was a *lapsus lingue*.

We were going along nicely, and had just crossed the river again, when the horse suddenly shied and turned short—over went the buggy! Henrietta and I fell out. I got up as dirty as a hog. After wiping my face, I said: "What is the matter? Has that old rascal run away?" He had broken loose from the buggy, and was sweeping over the hill. Henrietta was standing under a tree, with her unsoiled hat and fan in one hand, and the other hand held to her head. I went to her and gently took her hand down. My! what a sight! There was a great bruised knot over her left eye. When I asked her if she was hurt, she replied feebly, "No." I looked and saw Susien (my aunt, but I do not call her so) struggling to get out of the buggy. I started to help her, but she got out without any assistance. She was "done up," to be sure, and did not deny that she was hurt when I asked her. She was trembling, and saying, "Bless the Lord! how glad I am that we are not killed!" Henrietta and I could not help laughing at her.

Another such sight I never want to see. The buggy was turned completely over, and the wheels were spinning with electric speed; hats were on the ground, parts of dresses on the girls and other parts here



and there on the road and wayside. It was raining very hard; so we took shelter under the trees and waited a good while for some one to come along. I turned the buggy back to its right position, but it was crippled up considerably.

Directly several buggies came along, and we each stopped one and got in with the occupants. I did not go far before I found our horse tied to a tree, looking quite penitent. Of course I had to give up my comfortable situation in a friend's buggy and take a seat on the horse's bare back. It was still raining, and by and by the mud began to loosen from my face and head, and what did it reveal? Aye, naught but an ill-favored countenance full of bruises which began to swell. I put the old horse through in quick time. Everybody I met asked me questions which I answered with a bland smile; and then I would ask, "Do you think it will rain?" when it was already pouring down in torrents. I had on my best Sunday clothes, and so did the girls. They were ruined beyond doubt; but the girls, with that tenacity peculiar to their sex, hung on to their sundries, such as hats, fans, and kerchiefs, until all was over; and the next thing they did was to get their things safely stored away in some one's buggy.

Well, I arrived at home about the time Aunt Susien did. Aunt Lydia was "flustrated" and scared almost to death, and was saying: "What will your Uncle Jack say? Oh, tell me, are you hurt?"

Susien, Cartier-like, was crying, and cried until she went to sleep, while I had enough of my mother's pluck to laugh, and not take matters to heart so easily. Henrietta was about like me in this partic-



ular: she would laugh at a corpse. She did not get to come back home that night, for she had gotten in a buggy that went to Lowell's Station, and she had to stay out there all night. Her uncle, John Reeves, started after her, but another heavy rain made him turn back.

I went to town, and was the center of attraction for some time. Old men, boys, all were talking, asking questions. The old farmer, Henrietta's father, had to ask me all about the mishap. I could hardly face him at first, but after my courage arose I could have bearded a roaring lion in the jungles of Africa; so I told him all. He said he had advised the girls before they started to take some rags and plasters along, for they would need them; and now he reckoned they had rags enough, and he would furnish them with plasters. He was bitterly opposed to their going, you see, and seemed glad the accident had happened.

Well, after we had spent a night of suffering we arose and began to get ready for Sunday school and church; but a large mirror stopped Aunt Susien when she saw how ugly she was. I went on, however, and was turning off Main street to go up Church street when I saw Henrietta and her Uncle John coming. Such a sight as Henrietta presented! That large lump, or knot, above the right eye had settled in the left eye, and it was as black as my hat. I did not go to Sunday school, for I was alarmed about my—I need not say what. Henrietta came up to Uncle Jack, and such laughing as we did have, all talking at once.

Each one of us had a black eye or scratches on our



faces: we looked like the runaway animals of some circus. I fared the best of all. I was not hurt so fearfully as I thought, for my head proved to be harder than the gravel bar of the river. We did not venture out that Sunday. I would look at Henrietta and laugh, and ask her "if she was ever thrown sky high?"

Seven years have flown since then, but Henrietta still has a scar resting over her eye.

Uncle Jack was away from home when the accident happened; he came on Tuesday quite unexpectedly. I apprehended a funeral or two at his hands, but he only smiled and said he was sorry that our mischance had occurred.

Henrietta's "fellow," Glypse Warnerk, had to write to her and inquire after her welfare. I thought he would blame me for the casualty; if he had, I would have given him a good trouncing; but he dared not lisp a word about it, for I considered that it was not my fault; and then I had both girls on my side.

This small accident tended to make Henrietta tame toward me, and opened up a way for the progression and extension of my future courtship. This is how I tried to overcome the great opposition I had.



## CHAPTER XVIII.

VENI, VIDI, VICI.

"I CAME, I saw, I conquered." "I came" to do what? To commence again. Commence what? My courtship. Well, I will say, you are quite clever at guessing my thoughts, reader. "I saw" that I had rivals by the score, but I would go ahead and not heed them. I also saw the way open right there while Henrietta did not look so well. However, I was not paying attention to facial beauty, but adhered to the old maxim that "pretty is as pretty does." "I conquered." Yes, I had a way opened up, and all I had to do was to push my claim and extend my hand just then; but it took something to do all this—the cold cash, something I did not have. I am glad now I did not have any; but there was a place in Ledgerwood called "Blue Line," where nobody needed to have anything or to do anything, they said.

*Veni*, "I came." Yes, it was that way. No, it surely was not that way, after she had treated me as she did. Why, I am foolish to try again; she does not care for me. Well, well, well, I cannot let such a prize as she is slip; so I come again.

Henrietta, poor girl, had at least seven different beaux at once; how could she manage otherwise than to give several of them "the drop"? I would rather have been the one dropped at that time, for all were eventually disposed of except one, my rival;



and now that accident had put us together, we meant business.

*Vidi*, "I saw"; yes, I could see; but not much since that accident, for my eye was hurt very badly. I mean the power of reasoning, to perceive with the intellectual understanding. I saw how the case stood.

Glypse was afraid to come while Henrietta was looking so badly, and now I could go while she was so humiliating toward me. So accordingly I sent her my card, and my company was accepted.

I found out all. I had already the right version of affairs, and I no longer hesitated to take advantage of my rivals. Surely I could conquer the haughtiest of them all, Glypse Warneck.

*Vici*, "I conquered." Yes, I would conquer. That was what I had started in to do. I had them intimidated. I was no longer a bashful lover, afraid to speak my sentiments or set forth my opinions. I was, in a literal sense, a "done got there"; but I failed to make my engagements far enough, and my worst rival, Glypse, put an engagement right on top of mine (my last one). I fulfilled my engagements and longed to start again, but he was always ahead of me. He had failed to go one Sunday, and I got him and kept him for some time. He had put every imaginable kind of notion into my little "Castolina's" head. He was bitterly opposed to me; he was jealous, and he wanted to have his own way; but, alas! he was not "in it."

Half of the year had flown with the speed of a shadow. How short a time it seemed since I came to Uncle Jack's! Reader, you may think that I am



the only one of the five; but the rest of them are struggling along the same dusty road of life that I am.

I went to see Henrietta as regularly as the Sunday came. Happy hours glided by, and moonlight strolls were not uncommon with us. I was in buoyant spirits all the time. Her presence infatuated me; indeed, she was what I believed her to be, "all in all."

But while I was enjoying myself thus I forgot and let one Sunday pass without fulfilling my engagement. My eagle-eyed adversary took the chance, and for three long months reigned supreme and turned her heart, a part of it at least, against me. Reader, you see what one gets by not keeping promises in this and other things as well; but I had a good excuse, and came out all right in the end. I had been napping, and I had napped at the very worst time—the time when I should have proved myself worthy and true; but I had to go to church that day and pay off my debts—money for the preacher, etc. I had been going to church regularly, but my engagement this time was at the meeting hour.

I was resolved to win the day if it took a regiment of soldiers to do it. I would resort to some stratagem and work a trick on my rival, Glypse, as you will see in the next chapter. But did I have success? We will see.



## CHAPTER XIX.

### HOW THE THREE MONTHS WERE SPENT.

I STARTED to school on the first Monday in August, and in two months was to graduate in bookkeeping and banking. All opened up well—large attendance, good teachers, and genial schoolmates. My books made me abandon all thought of going with the girls any more through the week; but on Sunday I took it to heart, and all of the first Sunday was spent in planning a way of defeating my rival; then a failure of the plan would cause me to bewail my position, and again I would rally only to be depressed and dismayed. But, above all, I was not going to let him know that I was hurt; so, after calming myself, I thought by going to see Henrietta's cousin, Talle Reeves, I would have a chance to know more. She readily consented when I told her how I wanted her to act. I asked her to do her best in talking for me. I would tell her what to say and do, and she would act accordingly. I tried to find a vacant Sunday, but could not. I at last found out what was the matter with Henrietta: her father opposed me and favored Glypse because he was a clerk and had a lucrative income from the Oion Manufacturing Company.

I longed to talk with my little "Castolina," but all was against me: even my going with her cousin caused her lover to hurry up the intended marriage; so I failed there. I knew that Henrietta was now for me, but she could not help me much.



One rainy evening, as I was walking leisurely down the street, wrapped in a huge mackintosh and holding a mammoth umbrella over me, I saw I was nearing Henrietta's home; so looking up suddenly I saw her at the bay window. She appeared as if she had been crying, but a bright smile played on her lips when she saw me. I threw her a kiss which was promptly returned; but in another moment I noticed that she was gone. At first I did not think what was the matter, but a second thought convinced me that she was being watched and was about to be caught up with. There I stood in the rain, bewildered. I saw the window curtain of her own beautiful room glide noiselessly upward, and beneath stood the one dear object of my love and ambition. She knew the handkerchief flirtation, so I gave the desired motion, and we had a pleasant conversation, but it would have been far pleasanter if we could have communicated by the tongue and not by signs. I waved her a good-by.

Part of the conversation was concerning my getting to see her. I arranged to meet her that very night, and nowhere but under the eaves of her own room. We could not write, for at that time her father saw all her mail.

At a little after seven o'clock I went and got behind a large oak in front of her home. I had a handkerchief which was filled with phosphorus. I waved it again and again, and was about to give up all, even hope, when I was finally answered. I telegraphed to her, "Is all well?" and "All is well" came back.

Handkerchief flirtation, or telegraphy, was a grand thing for me. Henrietta and I had only learned it



for a pastime. It was a novel thing; few understood it; it could be used at any time, day or night, without danger, for we had an antidote for destroying the power of the phosphorus. I had learned it from an Indian servant we once had; I taught Henrietta, and we became experts. You know it takes two to make perfection; at least I thought it was that way.

Well, back to the main subject we go. I managed to climb a paling fence without tearing my trousers but once or twice, and, thanks to Cupid, I was soon at the window talking to my own intended darling. She had much to tell me, and I had a long talk for her, but you know we could not do all this in so short a time.

She said: "I have such a hard time, darling; but you are not the cause of it, as father says you are. My dearest one, I know you are true to me. I am certainly true to you, but under these circumstances it does not appear so. Let me assure you that you are far more welcome to come to see me than Glypse. I fairly hate him. Father has prejudiced me against him by doing as he has done."

I told her to throw a damper over Glypse by not talking of me when he brought up the subject; to turn it into something else. I also said: "Do not mention my name to him, or to your father, except in praise or commendation. Does Glypse ever say anything about me, darling?"

"Oh, yes, very often; he derides you nearly all the time, and tries to set me against you; but I will never, no, never, be so influenced."

I softly said: "'Castolina,' I thought you were not liking me as you should, but you have explained



it all satisfactorily; and now, my dearest one, it is growing late, and we must separate for the present."

She silently consented, and I said farewell and started back to Uncle Jack's. I did not climb the fence, but went around. That visit was probably the last for some time. I studied hard at school and was to complete my course in three more weeks, a month earlier than I had anticipated. I was to graduate in bookkeeping and banking. The First National Bank of Ledgerwood had already spoken for a graduate, and I stood a good chance of getting the position. The test was an examination. As luck would have it, I received the highest grade and was awarded the place. But this was a secret; I was to tell no one of it. The reason I never knew. I was going into the bank on the first of October as bookkeeper and cashier, with a salary of sixty dollars per month, to be increased if I proved satisfactory.

I had closed my schooldays—in the schoolroom, I mean, for you know "no one ever gets too old to learn." I went on a grand fishing and hunting excursion with a party of friends the last of August, and such a good, jolly time we did have! We were all boys, and each took his turn at cooking. We were to stay three or four weeks, and I believe we had provisions to last a year.

It finally came my time to cook. Everybody had gone from the camp except myself and a small negro boy who was to help me cook and do little chores such as cutting wood, keeping up fires, and bringing water; but I wanted him more for company than for anything else.

I thought I would cook some rice; so I got a gallon



of the grain and put it in a vessel containing about two gallons of water. It soon began to bubble and simmer, and finally to boil. I noticed that the rice began to fill the vessel to its utmost capacity, and charged the colored boy with putting in more rice, but he stoutly denied it. I had never seen rice cooked. It began to boil over. I took about half of it out, half done, but it still boiled over. I kept taking it out, and soon had all the available jars, vessels, and even the coffee pot full, and yet there was more than I had put in. So we had rice, you see.

I had not noticed the negro boy for some time; I was busy attending to the rice, and had quite forgotten him. I heard a scream, and looking out of the camp I beheld the funniest sight I had ever seen in my life. The boy had a large ten-pound turtle in his hand, but the turtle had the negro's toe in his mouth! I lay down upon the ground and rolled with laughter until I was faint. The negro was screaming at the top of his voice: "O, Lawd! Mars Cartier, cum take dis ole debbil off o' my foot; he am killin' me! O, Lawd! Mars Cartier, if you wus in my fix an' I wus in your'n, I'd not laff at you. O, Lawd! O, Lawd! [louder] O, Lawd!! I can't stan' it 'nuth-er minit! Cum, Mars Cartier, cum! I run off, but I won't agin; I'se so sorry. Pleas' cum an' take him off."

"What is the matter, Fred?" (for that was his name) said I; "is he hurting you?"

I turned to get the ax, and saw the negro fall over. I hurried to him, and there he lay on his back, his great black eyes dancing in his head and his tongue out. With one stroke I severed the turtle from the



boy's toe, and such a glad darky I never saw. I could hardly keep him off me, he was so glad.

The turtle proved to be a fine specimen of the green, edible kind. I cleaned it, and the negro, Fred, prepared it for dinner. He was not hurt much, but the turtle hung on to the toe of that boy until the old saying came true, "A turtle will hold on till it thunders."

I had dinner prepared, and was resting and waiting for the fishermen and hunters to come. They must be having success, I thought. Well, a rumbling noise in the west warned me that it was going to rain; that would drive them in, and also drive the turtle's head from the boy's toe. True to prediction, all the boys came up heavily laden with fish and venison. They had a hearty laugh when I told them of the negro's adventure; and about that time the turtle's head came off.

Well, after dinner some of the boys began to look around and saw the rice. One said: "Cartier, you are a good cook, but I declare you have cooked enough rice to feed an army!" I had to cook supper. Some of the boys said, "Look here, Cartier, don't cook as much biscuit as you did rice"; for I was making up my first batch of dough. I put in more grease than flour, and a great deal of saleratus.

Well, I put the mixture in the stove, for we had a regular kitchen outfit. After a little while I looked at the biscuits, and the sight was funny enough to make a hungry man laugh. They were swimming around in the grease, each biscuit about the size of a thimble.

Supper was soon ready, but there were not enough



biscuits (they were so good, I guess; but it may have been they were so small), so I had to make some more; but I never put any grease in them. All the boys said, "They are the best we have ever eaten."

My cooking was a failure, and it would have taken a man as rich as Jay Gould to provide enough flour for me; so said one of my witty companions.

Days swiftly passed, and it was time for us to go back to Ledgerwood. We had had fun, success, and, I am sorry to say, a failure in cooking for my part; but we had fattened up considerably.

The rest of the three months I spent in the bank at Lincoln, and in recreation.



## CHAPTER XX.

### THE PROPOSAL.

WE reached home without an accident or incident. I had another month to spend in recreation before my time to go into business.

I thought I would tarry at Lincoln, my home, a few days. I went, and had to walk from Chesterfield. I took the home folks by surprise, and they were surely glad to see their oldest son, who had grown a great deal and looked so much better than he did when he left home. All of my old friends came to see me, and I enjoyed myself finely those few days of September. I spent much of my time in riding around in buggies with girls, but I had not forgotten the one at Ledgerwood; and such a time I had!

I had not seen or heard of Henrietta in two months. She would surely think I was not true to her. I told her that night by the window that if I ever wrote I would address her letter to the colored cook. I wondered what her father and Glypse had gotten her to believe about my not being true. I feared that Glypse was trying to get a chance of "popping" the matrimonial question to her, and if this should be done, her father would force her to marry him. I had never thought of this before. Things were growing desperate, and I must do something, and do it quickly. So I wrote her thus:

LINCOLN, September 22, 18—.

*My Darling "Castolina":* You will doubtless think I am not



true; but, darling, I am as ever true. The reason I went off from Ledgerwood was, I wanted to have some recreation. I first went to the Sabine Lakes—you have heard of them—on a fishing and hunting excursion. We had a fine time, and had plenty of game. I will tell you all when I see you. Next I came to see my parents. You will forgive me, I know; I do not see any material wrong in doing so. My own little darling, I have had awful misgivings for the past few days: I thought Glypse had knocked me clear out, and that your father was trying to force you to marry him. I hope it is not true; but if it is, do not do it, my darling. I want to see you before long, and we will settle the question of our lives. You catch the idea, do you not? Well, if you do not, I will make it plain. I want to marry you—not now, no, not now, but at some future day. Will you be mine? Make the engagement to your devoted Will. I love you very dearly, and can never stand to see you forced into something distasteful to you. You are headstrong, and I know you will have your way if you can. Now, dearest one, answer soon, and end this suspense, for I am almost dying to see you. Inclosed find kisses for my darling Henrietta.

Yours, and always will be,

T. W. CARTIER.

P. S.—Write my address, John O. Annery. He is our gardener. Answer soon:

WILL.

I hurried to the office and mailed the letter. The little artifice that I tried to work on Glypse failed, as you have already seen.

It was Sunday morning. I was gloomy, yet the cool breezes of autumn seemed to refresh me, and the day was glorious. The sun seemed in the zenith of his power when I awoke. I felt dull and languid, and could not shake off the threatening doom which apparently hung unseen around my head. I ate breakfast with but little relish, and then retired to the parlor and lay upon a sofa, where I soon fell asleep. After some time—how long I know not—I awoke, feeling better.



Father was at home that day, for his appointment was in Lincoln then. After dinner he began quizzing me and asking questions. I answered the most important ones and evaded all that referred to girls. I would not talk on that subject. I told him of all that had happened in Ledgerwood since I was there, excepting my courtship.

I spent the night dreaming dreams that no mortal ever before dared to dream. I went hunting on Monday and stayed out all day, but did not have much success. I got mad at my dog and charged him falsely with causing my failure at hunting. I made up my mind that I would kill him—he was of no use; so up went my gun to my shoulder and I fired at him. He ran away yelping on three legs.

I wandered around for some time, and bagged two fox squirrels. Finally I got lost; I could not find my way home. I tramped around in a circle, just like all lost people, for some time. At last I grew tired and hungry—down I sat. I gave up all hope of again reaching a familiar place that day. The dog, poor fellow, came to me whining so piteously that I felt as if I wanted to kill myself. I arose, and he led the way. We got home a little after dark, and you may rest assured that that dog never suffered again by me.

Early Tuesday morning I went to the post office; there was a letter for our gardener, sure enough. I had told him of it, and he did not care at all. Eagerly I opened the envelope and read:

LEDGERWOOD, September 23, 18—.

*My Dear Tom:* I received your sweet little missive last night, and oh! I was so glad to hear from you. I told mamma all about our affair. She is in favor of you. Do not bother



yourself, for she will not tell father; but she does not think you are true to me because you have not come to see me often. I told her that you had had no chance. Mamma said: "I am afraid you are going to let that fellow fool you; he will take some other girl who has not treated him as you have done. But I replied that you had told me of your love so often, and that you were so honest—yes, honest as ever a boy was; and now, my dear boy, I want you to come to see her and tell her yourself; come and tell her that soon I shall be your loving bride; tell her all, my precious Tom. I long to see the day when you will come. How much longer, oh, how much longer will it be till that blessed day comes that will make us forever one! It almost crazes me at times to think the day is so far off. I would be happy to know it was to-morrow, but it is not so; oh, so long, so long! Mamma says you are putting me off, but I know that you are true to me, love. You are as free from deception as an angel in heaven; I know you are; yes, my Tom, I know you are. Of course you are not "going back" on me and break my heart; for it is not of stone, but melts at one look into your sparkling, innocent eyes.

Mamma says I am grieving myself to death about you; but I tell her that the time of grieving will soon be over; for when I am yours of course there will not be any more grief or sorrow in my heart than there is in heaven. I often think of the time when we will sit in our own little cottage by the sea, perhaps. We will be the happiest couple that ever wedded, and we will talk only of love while sitting around our humble home—you on the steps and I in the door. Oh, such a happy life we will live! And mamma can come to see us, and I will tell her that you were always true to me.

I must close my letter. I hope to hear from you soon in one of your long, delightful letters, and I want you to come and talk with my mamma. Be sure to come when you get back from Lincoln; but you had better write and tell when you are coming, so I can kill a "fatted fowl." I know you love "fowl," because your father is a Methodist preacher, and you are a Methodist too.

I am true, Tom. I call you Tom because I like that name best. Will sounds all right, but Tom suits you better, I think. So good-by for this time, my own dear Tom.



I remain as ever your sweetheart, and hope soon to be your blushing bride,

HENRIETTA SEAGUARDS.

I knew she would answer. I was no longer stupid, for her letter sent a thrill of animation through me, imbued me with new strength, and put the stamina of endurance as a foundation in me. I loved her better than my own life.

It was now time for me to return to Ledgerwood. On Wednesday I went back, but before I started I sent Henrietta a telegram, in care of a friend of mine, saying that I would take dinner with her on Sunday.

As the first of October came on Sunday, I was notified to be at the bank early Monday morning, just as soon as I had gotten there. It was in the two evening papers.

I took dinner with Henrietta. The farmer was not so bad after all; he seemed in favor of me when he found out how I stood, but he said I would squander all I made. I had a long conversation with Henrietta's mother, and a still longer one with Henrietta. I left very abruptly, and went to get myself in readiness for the bank.



## CHAPTER XXI.

### IN BUSINESS.

EARLY Monday morning I was at the bank, and my business qualifications were soon brought into use.

As I passed the post office that evening the postmaster handed me a letter. It bore the postmark of Lincoln. I broke it open and leisurely read:

AT HOME, LINCOLN, October 1, 18—.

T. W. CARTIER—*Dear Son*: I am aware that you have secured a good position. The best money saver is a good wife. You are young; but if you love, marry. I would not have you marry one you do not love. Henrietta has written and told me all. Go ahead. God bless you, my noble boy! May success attend you, and may you make rapid strides toward fame and fortune!

I am your loving father,

A. B. CARTIER.

The old farmer had had a hint of my wanting to marry his daughter, so he kept a strict watch over her.

A week soon passed. I met with flattering success at the bank, and had the esteem of the older heads. The president, A. C. Meirs, treated me better than most of fathers would have treated their sons. I told him of my plan to marry; he replied: "You are right, my son; you are young, but you have the experience I have never seen in men of twenty-five or thirty years. With a wife you could live cheaper and enjoy yourself better. I married young; I was about your age, but I have never regretted the step,



and never shall. I do not think you would either. My son, this is my advice; take it just to suit yourself. You and your wife could easily live on sixty dollars per month; but, pray, who are you thinking of marrying?"

I told him.

"Eh! yes, she will do. I have known her all her life. She has been rather too much of a hoiden, but girls must have their fun; and Henrietta will make you a wife worthy of all praise. But, my son, I hear that some one else is more likely to be the farmer's son-in-law than you are; it is Glypse Warner."

"Oh, yes," said I; "and the farmer has favored him all along; but, Mr. Meirs, I have the girl and her mother on my side; is not that better than all fathers?"

"Oh, yes, but I hear he is going to force her into marrying Glypse," said the president.

Our little conversation was suddenly interrupted by the farmer himself, who had come to deposit a pretty snug sum in the bank. His presence at the bank made me apprehensive. Did he come just to test me? I knew he would try to cheat me just for fun, or call my attention to some mistake. I deposited the money and gave him a receipt for it. I gave him no chance to fool me, but I fooled him. I asked him to change a ten; he said, "All right," but when he handed me the change it lacked some of being enough. I saw him wink at one of the clerks. How came he to visit the bank just as we were talking? But it was fulfilling the adage, "Speak of Old Nick and his imp will appear." Was that right? I do



not know. I had been noticing that he seemed to watch me very closely; it may not have been so, but it looked that way.

After he had gone awhile I decked out one of the clerks in policeman's regalia. I directed him how to act, and he did just as I ordered; he afterwards told me about it. He went to the old farmer and said: "Mr. Seaguards, did you not keep back some of the change at the bank a few minutes ago?"

"Oh, no, my man, I did not. How dare you suspect me of such a crime?"

"Come, I arrest you anyhow; it is my duty to it."

"Let me off; I'll give you the money back," said the farmer.

"I will let you off if you will come to the bank this hour."

"All right, I will be there," said he.

At the appointed time the farmer came in, gave me the money, and said: "Mr. Cartier, I beg your pardon for having treated you so. I meant it only as a joke; I hope you took it as such."

"Oh, no, Mr. Seaguards," I said; "I know you like joking, and so do I. I only had a clerk dressed in police uniform, and had him use you as a dupe. I did not care for the money at all; but you had come in to fool me, and got the tables turned on yourself. I think it rather funny. I knew all the time why you came here. You wanted to see if I had the strict business-like way of doing things; and I have. Mr. Seaguards, I hope you are not offended in the least. Let's have a good laugh, and let it pass. Come, have some ginger pop?"

"All is well. I am at your laughing; it was only



a joke. I glory in your way of doing business, for success will surely be yours if you continue to do as you are doing."

He went out a more thoughtful man, I hope, than when he first came in; but I noticed that he acted in a choleric manner, and looked as if he would like to get even with me. But I was in business, and was going to carry out the rules of the bank to my utmost ability.

October passed, and the chilly winds of November shrieked in a direful dirge. Winter had set in early. On Thursday of the first week I received a neat envelope bearing the address card of Mr. Seaguards. I thought it was from Henrietta, but it proved to be from the old farmer. I opened it and read:

AT HOME, Thursday.

MR. T. W. CARTIER—*Dear Friend*: As you are my friend, I presume it my duty to apprise you of the fact that my daughter is to marry. Mr. Glypse Warner is the fortunate man. Now, Mr. Cartier, I want you to come and be a witness to the affair. I wish you were the one to get her, and as it is I am sorry. Come, the wedding will be Friday afternoon at four o'clock. I do not want a public concern to be made of it, and I trust you will not betray the secret.

Yours,

G. A. SEAGUARDS.

Would I go? I would ponder over the question and the invitation. I saw what the old farmer was driving at: he wanted to see my mortification, and then mock me to my face; or maybe he would have my rival to assassinate me if I made a false step. I did not know what to do. I must see my darling, and that quickly.

Luckily Henrietta came to my rescue. That evening I received a letter from her. I read:



*Dearest Tom:* I am aware that father has sent you a card telling you that I am to be married. I shall never marry if I have to be forced into it. Father is trying to force me into marrying Glypse. You know how I fear not to obey father. Something must be done. Oh, the life I am living! I cannot get out to see anyone for father; and if I marry Glypse I will fare worse, and I never will be happy again. I never did want to marry a drunkard, and I never shall if I can help myself.

Darling, you must come and help me. I have a plan to fool them. You come, and when the magistrate says, 'Does anyone here object to this couple marrying?' etc., you arise and say you object. If they ask for your objections, tell them all about it. Tell them you have my consent in writing, and that I was forced into the contract with your rival, and not a word have I written him.

But, my dearest boy, you had better prepare yourself for some emergency, for Glypse will try to slay you on the spot if you do this, for you know his way, and perhaps he may be drunk. O, darling! I can never have anyone for a husband but you; I love no other but you. Come, do not fail; for my life will surely be blighted if you do not come. I am so very sad; I wish you were here to cheer me. An unjust father and a drunken lover nearly distract me; but I know I have another whom I can trust. Oh, do not break off from me and think me untrue, for I idolize you, my love and my future husband. Farewell till Friday.

Your own darling,

"CASTOLINA."

Was she in the plot too? I would go anyhow. I could not bear to see her forced to marry a drunken wretch. I was sorry for her; I knew she suffered there—a perfect slave, worse than a dog. I would go; I could not stay away. I would try to outwit her father. So I answered both of them, saying that I would be there promptly and surely.



## CHAPTER XXII.

### AT THE WEDDING.

I WAITED with impatience for Friday evening to come. At last it rolled around. I prepared myself so that I would not get hurt if Glypse offered to fight me. I put on a thick breastplate under my evening attire, and armed myself with a good revolver. I was not going to commence any difficulty that might happen, but it was well to be on one's guard in such a place on such an occasion.

I found Henrietta away, and her father and Glypse drunk. Her father and I were the witnesses. When the magistrate called them all up for the ceremony my heart began to flutter, and a feeling of madness rose in my bosom. But I must control myself.

"If there are any persons here who object to this couple being married, let them say so; and if not, let them forever hereafter hold their peace." These words had hardly died upon the lips of the justice when I stepped out in the middle of the room and said, in a serene voice: "I object."

The old farmer turned deadly pale, and Glypse trembled visibly.

The justice said: "Mr. Cartier, state your objections; and if they are true and you can substantiate them, I will not perform the ceremony; but if you cannot, I will proceed."



I said: "I object, first, because this girl does not want to marry that man, and her father has forced her to consent against her will; second, I object to this marriage because I have her consent, in writing, to marry me. If these objections will not do, I can present others."

I showed him the letter; he read it with care, and asked Henrietta if she had written it.

"Yes, sir, I did," said Henrietta.

"Well, friends, I cannot proceed with the ceremony, for this young man has objected and proved his objections; so good-night," said the justice, and out of the room he walked.

"You lied, you scoundrel! I'll kill you on the spot! I never did it; prove it, if you can," said Glypse.

"I have done it already. I do not wish any fight—in here at least; but I will 'do you up' if you will just be so kind as to step out of the house. I will see you later. I do not, as a gentleman, take such insults as you have uttered. You are afraid to face me," I said, with my voice slightly raised, my eyes dancing like fire, and my anger growing fiercer.

He became furious, and stepped toward me, with a revolver in his hand, cursing me with the vilest of oaths.

I said: "Stop, do not come farther, or I will knock you down."

"Down me! You—why—you—eh! You can't do anything. Say another word and you'll get cold lead," said my irate rival.

The farmer stepped between us, and I thought he was going to take the other fellow's part, but he



said: "Don't have any trouble here, please; this is no—"

"Let him say another word and he will have to try me. The low-down cur is afraid."

"I am not afraid of you, you rascal!"

"Bang! bang!" I was shot, and fell to my knees. I was not hurt, for the bullet of no ordinary revolver could penetrate the breastplate that I wore.

I raised myself to a sitting posture, and began answering my rival's gun. "Bang! bang! bang!" Glypse fell heavily to the floor. The farmer was crying "Murder! murder!" at the top of his voice.

I had not gotten up from my sitting position, and I saw the farmer making at me with a huge knife. How its long, keen blade glittered in the weird light and suffocating smoke! I snapped my revolver at him twice before I thought, but it would not go off. He was closing on me, and I must do something. I hated to strike an old man, but I saw my life was in jeopardy; so, with a superhuman effort I raised my cane and dealt him a terrible blow on the head, and he fell.

I rushed out of the room, for I was getting tired of such sport. I felt hot, and when I put my hand to my face and removed it, there was blood upon it. Had I been shot or stabbed without knowing it? I went into another room and got a lamp and saw that I was shot. I was not badly wounded, for the bullet hit the breastplate and glanced upward, striking my face.

I began to look for Henrietta, and found her in her room; she had fainted, but I soon revived her. The farmer had taken every advantage, for all were



gone from home save himself and Henrietta. I bade "Castolina" follow me. We went to the home of Mr. Meirs. He took us in and treated us with parental hospitality.

I went to the police headquarters and gave myself up. I made a small bond for my appearance when wanted. The news of the tragedy spread like wild-fire. Nearly all the people approved my act when they found how it was. The papers did not suffer for want of news.

The farmer and Glypse were not hurt fatally, but the latter seriously. The farmer had a wound on his head, and several bandages were required for him. Glypse was shot in three places, once in the shoulder and twice in the arm. I went to see them next day. I apologized to Glypse, telling him I was sorry the affray had happened, and that he would have done as I did. He accepted my apologies, but wanted to know why I was not killed, or wounded in the breast, for he had seen the bullet strike my bosom. I replied that I was doing right and he was not, and, besides all this, I was "charmed" so that no human hurt could befall me.

Glypse asked me if I would prosecute him. I told him no, if he would leave the town, or die, I would not do anything, but for him never to attack me again. I then left him and went back to the bank.

The next question was, Where shall Henrietta stay? I was not ready to marry yet. She could not stay at Uncle Jack's, for they were already crowded, and Aunt Susien had gone back home; Henrietta did not like the other girls much. She could not stay at home; at least, I did not want her to. I would get



her a room at Mr. Meirs's until Christmas. There was but one girl there, and she was an invalid. I knew my little "Castolina" would like to stay there. All that wealth could afford was in the Meirs mansion. She could not help but like to stay.

I worked faithfully at the bank, and my wages were increased. I had saved some money, and put my rival out of the way for the time being. I need not court any longer. I had not done much at courtship, it is true, but enough to win the fairest girl among ten thousand and the most lovely of all. Her charms outrivaled those of the water nymphs, and the beautiful lilies must have envied her exquisite complexion. I had had a hard time getting her. Just think of it! I had been discarded twice; let my rival find me napping and outwit me; ran the risk of being caught by climbing to her window; let a horse run away with us and almost kill her; went to her marriage and "knocked it in the head" by shooting her lover and splintering my cane upon her father's head; and now a trial for assault. Yes, I had had trouble in getting her; but I was fully compensated for all that, and yet I did not have her—only her promise, but that was good.

Glypse did not want to push the matter any further, but through the persuasion of his friend he did so, and I had a trial on my hands. Henrietta's father did not believe my objections were true, and he had me arraigned for alienation of her affections, and she was sued for a breach of promise. What absurd charges! I was the one to bring charges, but I find that the less you have to do with courts the better off you are. And it is curious to me that



some people who always get the "little end of the horn" in everything keep on till they are all but annihilated. Such a pitiful sight was presented by these two men—drunkards. Never be a drunkard, young man; never marry a drunkard, young woman.

The trial was set for the following week. I was ready for it, and employed the ablest lawyer at the bar. I knew we would win the case. The day came and my case was called. The lawyer for the farmer and Glypse made an able defense, but I won. Henrietta also in her trial won after reproducing all our letters and little talks, and proving them. Lawyers, clients, and the people in general heard all with eagerness, and I thought it sounded like a wonderful romance. Henrietta told the story from beginning to end with such trueness that she could not fail of a favorable decision.

We went to her room at the Meirs mansion, and she and I had a long conversation. Our wedding was set for Christmas-eve night. I would have a grand Christmas present, would I not? All came true as I had said, and time sped along.



## CHAPTER XXIII.

### A LONG-LOOKED-FOR EVENT.

DECEMBER had been ushered in. I had bought me a little cottage in the suburbs of Ledgerwood. It was a beautiful brown-colored little house, with bay windows in front and containing four rooms. I had it furnished with everything necessary for young beginners in housekeeping.

I wrote father, telling him all the happenings of the past month. I requested him to send my sundries, and they came all right the very next week, with a long letter from him. He had read of the scrape I had gotten into as reported in the *Morning Chronicle*, a paper printed at Ledgerwood. It gave a fair description of the whole occurrence, and had the portraits of the participants. The account was newsy, interesting, and yet it was not exaggerated in the least, if it did seem thrilling, rare, and funny.

The days and weeks passed before we knew it. It was Christmas eve. A slight snow had fallen, but it was clear overhead; a shrill north wind was blowing, nevertheless it was not so disagreeable that we could not go to church. I had always wanted to marry in a church. Dr. Bone was to officiate.

The last bell rang when Henrietta and I entered. We were greeted with smiles and whispers of welcome. I thought Henrietta was lovelier then than on any other occasion that I could recall. She wore a pink silk waist, with a dark gray velvet skirt;



a small bunch of geraniums adorned her head; a spray of chrysanthemums drooped at her bosom; a pink Neapolitan coral chain graced her neck, and a pair of fine gold bracelets clasped her beautiful arms.

The maids and gentlemen of honor were Antonina Burch, Delia Dork, James Burch, and Tybott Hays. The maids were our best lady friends, the gentlemen the worthiest in Ledgerwood and our truest male friends.

“Will you please join hands, my dear young friends?” said Dr. Bone, “and I will go through the ceremony; but, first, does anyone here know any just cause why these two persons should not be joined in holy wedlock?” Silence reigned supreme. “If not,” said the minister, pausing to get breath, “let him forever hold his peace.” No one had said anything. Dr. Bone then proceeded with the ceremony that made Henrietta and me forever one. He took the ring which I had provided as a wedding gift for Henrietta, and placed it on the forefinger of her left hand, with words suitable to the occasion. Numerous were the congratulations and good wishes spoken to us.

We received several beautiful and useful presents. A large, neat bureau, with mirror on top, was the gift of Mr. and Mrs. Meirs. Uncle Jack and Aunt Lydia gave us an elegant tea service. Henrietta's mother gave a nice water set. Other presents were received from persons whom we did not know; among these were a bicycle for each of us; a nice watch, chain, and ring for Henrietta; a typewriter, a fine suit of Prince Albert clothes, a mustache cup and



saucer for me. I had no mustache, and did not need any clothes—a joke, I guess.

We then went to the Meirs mansion with our friends, and partook of the infair supper, which was indeed a feast of things beautiful and good. We stayed there that night, and were to take Christmas dinner at Uncle Jack's. I can now say that I have realized the yearnings of my heart for the last few months, and have captured my "all in all."

Dinner was taken at Uncle Jack's, after which we strolled out to see our future home. Henrietta seemed to be well pleased with the cozy little brown house, and was surprised to see it furnished and ready for us to move into on the following day. I possessed a charming wife, a pleasant cottage, and drew a snug salary that could easily support us two. The height of my ambition was reached. I longed for nothing else. We were happy, and always agreed.

We occupied our new home the next day. Happiness was our motto, and we lived up to it to the best of our ability. We were serenaded the first night. The music was rendered by select performers with the best of instruments, and the serenade was delightful. We enjoyed the surprise greatly. I went to the door and invited the company in. When they had played a number of selections, my wife was asked to favor them with some music, as she was an expert pianist. "We have no piano," said I. "No piano!" said they; "what is that?" pointing to a covered box or something. I examined it, and sure enough it was a piano; but where did it come from, who bought it, and when? I did not know until I saw on it, "From your father and mother." How it



got there was a mystery to me, and still is. My wife complied with their request, of course.

We soon drifted into conversation. The crowd consisted of seven boys and seven girls. They found that I was gifted in story telling, and I had to sit for at least two hours and tell stories. They would give me a song every time I finished a story. It grew late, and after playing Godbey's "Good-night" they departed.

It was now holiday time, and the bank was closed. Henrietta and I took the next train for my father's home in Lincoln.



## CHAPTER XXIV.

### THE HONEYMOON.

WE took the nine o'clock train the next morning. I suddenly remembered that about a year ago I had ridden on the same train for a visit to Uncle Jack's. I never dreamed of such a thing as marrying before the year was out.

After we had started I went to the rear coach; Henrietta followed me. There we found sister Lula, cousins Ethel, Mamie, and Tom, all on their way home.

"How have you all enjoyed your year's visit, children?" I asked; "have you fulfilled your parents' wishes?"

"Oh, to me the visit has been fine, and I enjoyed it ever so much," said Cousin Mamie; "but I never thought of staying a year at Uncle Jack's, and going to school, Cousin Will. I have nearly completed the studies of art and music; one more session will enable me to finish. I also, like you, have tested courtship. James Burch has been my ardent admirer for the past year. We have had plenty of ups and downs, to be sure. But you know I did not want to do as you did—marry without first knowing that I could succeed, and make it as successful as you have done. You are aware that Mr. Burch, the individual banker of Ledgerwood, does not sanction his son's attention to me. I know not why, but I have my ideas concerning the matter: he does not



want his son to select a homely girl, who has no fortune and does not expect to have one soon; he cannot see any commendable traits of character that a country lass has. I am not boasting, but using myself as an example of such. Where are you going, cousins Will and Henrietta? To Uncle Abe's [my father]?"

"Oh, no," said I, "not exactly; we shall only stay there to-night, then go to the capital of the state, thence to the Montana Falls and Chalybeate Springs, and back to the Sabine Lakes, where I went on that fishing excursion, and then to Ledgerwood. What makes you so quiet, Little Ethel? Have you done anything of note?"

"Not much, but I mean to do much. I and Cousin Lucy—or I should have said Cousin Lucy and I—are to be missionaries. We have studied the matter over, and when I am nineteen I am surely going. Would you not?"

"Yes, if I felt it my duty to go, I would. I am glad that you are so willing to do something for the Master; but how old are you now?"

"I will be sixteen in February. You know I was fourteen before I came to Uncle Jack's, and I was fifteen in the February after I came in December."

The train had stopped, and cousins Mamie and Ethel had to get off. Uncle John Bell came in to help them off. He did not know any of us, and hardly knew his own children. I introduced him to Henrietta.

"Who is she, did you say?"

"My wife, Uncle John. Did you not know I was married?"



"No, indeed; I never had thought of such a thing as that. I will say you have a worthy-looking woman. If she has as good a character as personal appearance, you are to be proud of her," said he.

"Yes," I replied, "but I had an 'awful time' getting her. You also have two young women who will be married before you know it."

"Yes, but they are too young for that. Mamie is about nineteen, and Ethel is sixteen. Can't you all go home with us? I am in a hurry, and the train is about ready to start."

"No, Uncle John, we cannot go now. I will bring my wife to see you in the summer. June will do, will it not?"

"Yes; good-by—good-by, little woman," said he, shaking "Castolina's" hand. "Come; be sure you come. We will welcome you in our very best manner. So good-by," and he bowed himself out.

The train rolled on, fast and faster, and in an hour we were at Chesterville. Father was there, waiting for Lucy; he did not know that we were coming. His buggy would not hold half of us; so I hired a calash, and Henrietta, Cousin Tom, and I got in, and away we sped. We reached Lincoln before father and Lucy did. I presented my wife to mother; they seemed to like each other on first acquaintance. Father and Lucy drove up. Night came and went; another day had dawned.

We started for the capital of the state. It was seventy-five miles from Lincoln to "Briett" (the nickname of the capital). We arrived there about one o'clock P.M. We went to a hotel and took dinner, after which we visited the three parks; these



were not very attractive, but for the season of the year they looked well enough. The North Central was the most beautiful of the three; in it was a large pool of water that was frozen almost solid. Henrietta and I bought a pair of skates each, and tried our skill upon the ice. I fell and broke my nose, and Henrietta slipped frequently, but came off unhurt. After selling our skates to a burly Irishman, we went to the capital. It was a massive marble structure, with giant bay windows in front and huge doors that were open to all—a grand old building of a half century's age, looking down from a high hill upon a fine, progressive city and a broad expanse of cultivated lands.

Governor Briggs was a personal friend of my father's; they were reared together, went to the same school, studied the same books, and played the same games. We called on him, and he was very glad to meet us and to know of us and our family. He urged us to spend the night with him. We accepted his kind invitation and went to his beautiful home. Our pleasant stay there can never be forgotten by either Henrietta or myself.

After settling our bill at the hotel, we took the train for the Mountain Falls, and arrived there at precisely three o'clock P.M. We did not get to see the falls that evening, but contented ourselves with the beautiful scenery—the tall, snow-capped mountains and the widespreading woods and fields and valleys. The excellent table fare at the hotel, with the pure water and tonic air of the place, made one feel buoyant and happy. We spent the night in restful slumber, and next morning went to see the falls and



springs. The weather was intensely cold, but with the aid of rugs and muffs and greatcoats and mackintoshes, we managed to keep warm. The great, high falls had frozen; we were beneath them, and a look upward at the colossal icicle filled one with awe. It stood back one hundred feet or more, and seemed to loom as if some gigantic monster were pulling at it. All this was caused by the tiny stream that still ran down the surface of the falls. This streamlet broke into a radiant silver spray—a scene of grandeur for the eye and of rapture for the soul. Nearly all of the giant icicle was as transparent as the clearest glass, and as lovely as the fairest flower. The spray would start from above and freeze long before it reached the base, and fall as dormant hail. One side of this ice-crystal monument was quite jagged, and, when the sun shone, it cast a gleam like the rays of the solar spectrum.

I was beside myself with astonishment and awe. I feared that the mammoth piece of ice might suddenly break loose and fall on some one; yet I was rapt in wonder at the beauty of this master work of nature. We took a farewell glance at this “beauty of beauties,” and then moved onward to a point where four different springs bubbled and sparkled within a radius of twenty-five feet. I took a drink from each spring. We returned to the hotel wiser and happier because of the things we had seen.

We made the trip to Ledgerwood by way of the Sabine Lakes. A whole day was spent traveling in a two-horse barouche, and yet we were not near Sabine—a small town on the Sabine Lakes. We had to find a place in which to stay all night. It had



begun to grow dusky, and the weather changed from a cold wind to a milder one, which brought on more snow. We were not going to despair if we did not find a stopping place. The bride said she enjoyed the novel situation, and had as soon continue in it as not. The horses were not very much fatigued, so we drove on; we soon reached the turnpike, and did not hesitate to go on to Sabine that night. The bride and I were not in a hurry, but we did not like the thought of spending the night with some mountaineer. We traveled all night long. "Castolina" went to sleep and slept for some time.

Sabine was reached early in the morning. Columns of smoke curled up from a few chimneys, but there were not many other signs of activity in the town. I bade our driver go to the nearest hotel; there we took breakfast, after which we went to our rooms and slept until the dinner hour. We awoke just in time for our share of the meal, for a large crowd of merrymakers had just returned to the hotel from the lakes. They reported a good time in the forenoon, and expected better sport in the afternoon. Of course Henrietta and I would not miss that pleasure.

I nearly finished my dinner, and yet all were not filled: those who had just arrived from the lakes had to dine, and nothing did the hotel cooks have prepared. I noticed they had chicken for dinner; and such tough chicken it was! I could not half chew it, much less eat it, but I did my part in trying. I was anxious to see what the other guests would get. Chickens, I guessed; and sure enough, chickens began to squall. I rushed out in the back yard, and



the old cook had three or four killed and about as many more ready to share the same fate. The very oldest chickens of the lot were chosen, venerable roosters with spurs two inches long seemed to be the favorites. I wanted to know why these old fowls were used; not for economy surely, for the guests would reject such tough fare, and when they departed they would give the hotel a good "blasting." I could not see how the landlords held their patronage as well as they did.

Well, that evening my pretty one and I went to the lakes, but we did not take any part in the exercises—save the laughter, in which we heartily joined; for many fell, and great was their fall. I never saw the like before—broken noses, bruised heads, blistered extremities, and cold bodies were the common fate.

After having seen all this fun, we retired to the hotel for the night. Chicken was still served for every meal.

Henrietta was tired of sight-seeing, and longed to see Ledgerwood; so we prepared for the journey. I had to hire a conveyance. We finally started, and arrived at home late in the evening.

One week of our honeymoon had passed; we were to spend the other part of it at home. We were happy, and seemed to get along with each other charmingly. I never dreamed of aught but this; I thought it would always be thus; but alas! as will be seen in the next chapter, it turned out otherwise.



## CHAPTER XXV.

### LEFT.

NEW-YEAR had come, and I took my place at the bank soon after the honeymoon tour. I had much to do.

About two weeks after I returned from my trip, as I went to the bank I met Glypse Warnerk. I politely bowed, and he returned the salutation with a show of politeness, but I noticed that he had a dogged, downcast look. I felt sorry for him, and went into the bank without paying much attention to him.

That very night I was detained, and had to go home late, for business had been pressing all day. I could not help being late. As I went home I saw Glypse, in disguise, walking down the street; he didn't see me. I went home; all was darkness, no happy smile or loving kiss or girlish figure to meet me at the door. Henrietta has gone to bed, I thought; but when I lit the lamp I found my supposition not to be true. A note lay on the center table; I looked and read:

*Dearest Tom:* I hope you will not be as broken-hearted as I am when you read this. I have left you, not because I do not love you, but because you are untrue to me. Another has alienated your affections from me; another woman has blighted my home and my hope. Oh, how could you do it? How could you break my heart for that silly woman? Tom, my dearest Tom, how lonely I will be! I have heard all; you need not deny it. You have been harboring Adeline with you at



the bank for the past week, and to-day she asked you to marry her, and you said: "Marry you! yes, I would." These are your own words. I have proof. O my Lord, why hast thou dealt so heavily with me? Tom, I pray that this is not true. I hope you will prove it to be otherwise. O my dearest one, I do not see how you could have done thus. To accuse a husband of such unfaithfulness is a great matter, I know, but I must not refrain. I shall always love you, but to live with you I cannot, with this scandal against you. So farewell, a long farewell.

Your wife,

HENRIETTA CARTIER.

Suicide was the first thing that entered my mind, although she said nothing of it: it must have been a premonition of mine. The house was not in any disorder; all was as tidy and clean as ever. It lacked but one thing of being home, and that was Henrietta. I was dumbfounded, I was beside myself with astonishment. I had never dreamed of such a thing as Henrietta leaving me, and thinking me untrue. I could prove beyond doubt that I was as true as steel. I sat down and began to think.

It occurred to me that I ran a narrow risk of being waylaid. Was not Glypse Warnerk lurking around in disguise, waiting for me to go home, when he and Mr. Seaguards would assassinate me? As providence would have it, I turned down an alley and missed them. How thankful I was that I had business that took me home by that route! But I need not be thankful; I was none too safe yet: a stealthy foe might be around watching me, and kill me after all. I dared not go to bed. I found a crumpled piece of paper that verified my suspicions and convictions. I was afraid to stay alone, but I would do so anyhow. I would not hunt for my wife that night. I guessed she was at her father's. After long reflec-



tion I concluded to write to her, as I stood no chance of seeing her soon. This is my letter:

AT HOME.

*My Dearest Wife:* When I read your letter I was amazed beyond degree to think that you deemed me so faulty, and had gone, gone! I could not believe it, but a search for you convinced me that you had left your happy home and husband. How could you have done so? Because "I am untrue." What a false idea! I can prove that I am true. You did me a very great wrong in accusing me of so foul a crime. I did not know that Adeline Summers had such a character. I now remember how she came into the bank only once, where I was, and that was to-day. She came on business; she wanted to find how a note stood, and to fix it accordingly. "Stayed there a week," eh! I supposed from the way in which she talked that she and Edgar Bruce were in love, and I began teasing her about him. She told me that he had proposed to her, and she wanted to know what I would do if I was one of the contracting parties—Edgar, for instance. I said: "I would marry you; yes I would, if I were he." This is true; I can prove it by more than one. Your father stepped in about this time, and, I suppose, heard only a part of the conversation, for we were talking in an undertone. Could you base any truthful charge on that? Why did you not see me first, instead of going off? I do not blame you as much as I do your old father and that scoundrel Glypse Warnerk; they knew the girl's character, and are at the head of this plot against me. I do not expect this to be the last of their mischief. I have found out their plan. They exaggerated the little circumstance at the bank until it became something serious, just to set you against me; and then they would kill me. I shall see to this, if the law does not. Some one has to suffer, for I mean what I say.

O, Henrietta darling, why did you leave me? Why did you permit those heartless men to darken our happy home? I do not see how you could leave me when we love each other better than all else. Your father and that ruffian Warnerk would delight in breaking hearts and in ruining, even murdering, me. The idol of my household has been taken away. How sorrowful I am! O, darling "Castolina," come back! Come back to



me, and let us live peaceably. O, dearest one, you are not the cause of my desolation. I know you will come back if you can.

Darling, do not let anyone see this. Know that I am faithful and true to you, living up to the sacred promises and vows I made at our marriage altar. Oh, it pains me to think that you would for a moment doubt my fidelity to these solemn pledges. You must believe me. I know it is commonly said that a woman believes everything she hears, sees, and even thinks. I do not charge you with this weakness, darling; but if you do not possess it, you are an exception to a very general rule. I know that you will not be happy, and I want you to come. I think I have fully explained myself. Now, as man and wife let us live up to our vows.

I am, my dearest one on earth, the same I ever will be—your husband.

T. W. C.

I had barely finished writing when some one rapped at my door. I could not decide whether to open it or not, so did not say anything.

“O, Cartier, open up! What is the matter with you?”

I recognized the voice and opened the door. There stood James Burch and Edgar Bruce. I said: “Come in, gentlemen. I am alone this evening.”

“Where’s your wife, old man?” asked James; “is she gone?”

“Yes,” I answered; “she is at her father’s.”

“But I heard that you did not agree very well; is that so?”

“Yes, it is so; but I would have to go into details to explain it to you. What brings you two here so late?”

“We have come to settle that office bill; how much is it? Be in a hurry, for we leave to-morrow. Mr. Meirs could not attend to it to-day, and you were



too busy. We called at the bank, but it was closed; so we came over here. Say, we had a little scrape as we were on our way. We met two men, one a nice-looking old man, the other we did not see very well. They surely mistook one of us for somebody else, and were about to assail us. When I spoke they must have recognized me, for they ran. They did not see but one of us at first. I am almost determined to report the affair to the police. It happened in the very worst part of the town. What! what was that I heard? Listen, hark! Oh, it is only some one shooting off his pistol. Say, Cartier, get the books, for we want to go."

I gave them the books, and they settled the bill. They then started to leave, but I begged them to stay all night with me. They said they could not. I told them I was alone and afraid. When I heard their story and the pistol shots, I was indeed afraid. Finally they consented to stay if I would call them up early. I promised that I would do so. I slept in a room above, Ed and Jim in the front room below. I lay and thought, but could not go to sleep. Every little noise would scare me; the throbbing of my own heart sounded like the tolling of a distant bell; even the chirrup of a cricket seemed like a death knell to me. I longed for daylight to come. I did not sleep a minute during the whole night. Finally, after waiting and fearing, I was aroused by Ed calling me; he wanted to know what time it was. I told him it was time to be up; so I arose and built a fire and cooked breakfast. Reader, you know something of my qualities as a cook. I had the boys off before train time.



## CHAPTER XXVI.

### FOR MURDER.

I LEFT home before daylight. I mailed the letter to Henrietta, and went to the bank. Daylight soon came. An office boy handed me the morning paper, and the first thing I saw was: "*Mysterious Murder! One of Our Best Business Men Implicated.*" I read the account. It was of a dead man found at my gate! My hair stood on end. A bloody shirt found!—mine! I nearly fainted. A stranger, the murdered man. No motive; police have a clew. Witnesses, two—who? Glypse Warnerk and Mr. Seaguards. The accused not at home—wife away—a mean wolf in sheep's clothing. Police on the watch at outgoing trains. Five hundred dollars reward for the murderer. A mob forming.

As I read I grew faint. I saw that I was gone. I knew the murderers, but how to turn the tide was the puzzle. I must suffer; I ought not to have been so lenient toward them in times past. But a little piece of paper—their plot—saved me and condemned them.

My enemies had failed in their first attempt to ruin me; they had missed the occasion at the would-be wedding; they had failed the night before; and now they had me up for murder. They mistook Ed and Jim for me and some one else; and seeing one of them they thought it was I but when the other spoke they ran; or, finding that I had foiled them, they came to my gate, and meeting the stranger, still supposing it to be me, they killed him. I discerned all that in an instant.



I was expecting my arrest at any moment, so I went to my counsel and told him all. He was very much surprised to see me, and tried to hide me, but I laughingly bade him be quiet. As I stepped out of the office I was arrested. I could not make bond, for everybody had turned against me. Do you guess my enemies were laughing in their sleeves? Well, they would soon be crying aloud for mercy.

At my request I was quickly arraigned in court, and a speedy trial followed. The two witnesses were there, looking triumphant. My lawyer first called the old farmer to the stand, and began asking him about my character. He said it was good as the people saw it, but when examined privately it was corrupt. He was on the point of repeating the lie he had told on me, which caused my wife to leave me, when my attorney asked him if he knew the paper (their own written plot). He fell backward; Glypse started; the room was in confusion. After order was restored the lawyer described the plot as he supposed it, and as it was. The witness came to our rescue and confessed, but begged for mercy—and I was free. The tables were turned: I pleaded an *abibi*, and proved it by Edgar Bruce, James Burch, and that piece of paper. I was glad the boys stayed with me; they missed their train by being apprised of my arrest, but they did not care. I was exonerated.

Of course I had my foes arrested. With my help their sentences were commuted to twenty years for Glypse and fifteen years for the old farmer, instead of life imprisonment. I could have prosecuted them for attempting to take my life, for alien-



ation of my wife's affections, and for slander; but I did not.

Henrietta wrote to me:

*Dearest One:* Will you forgive your own truant little wife for acting so rashly? I will come back to you, Tom, for I cannot live without you; I will come this evening. I hate the way my father does. He and Glypse received their just punishment, but it will nearly kill mother. Try to cheer her. I accept your explanation. Tom, I will come never to leave again alive. I will tell you all when I see you.

Your bride,

HENRIETTA CARTIER.

That evening I was happy once more, for my wife and her mother came. There was nothing now to mar our happiness. My two relentless foes would soon be wearing the convicts' striped uniform, and doing the state some service.

I sold my house and lot and moved to the Seaguards mansion. I was nearer my work now. If ever happiness came to a household, it was to that one. Although a cloud of shame hung over it, the farmer having lost his once good name and fair record through evil associations, no shame could rest on his wife and children. Good does sometimes come out of evil, doesn't it? The farmer had been led astray by that arch deceiver, Glypse Warnerk. He would find it not in the least funny to be a convict; but he thought it would be T. W. Cartier instead of himself. How sadly mistaken he was!

The last I saw of Glypse in Ledgerwood, for a long time, was on the day he was carried to the penitentiary. I said to him: "Be sure your sin will find you out." He only turned his head slightly and uttered a violent oath.



## CHAPTER XXVII.

### THE SEQUEL.

TIME is the great changer of nature. It brings joy with every sorrow, sweet with every bitter. "What wonders hath time wrought!" It produces nations, and sees their rise, progress, and fall. Old Father Time, with his deadly scythe, sweeps along with furious speed.

"Castolina" and I love each other as dearly as ever. No more sorrow is to enter our happy abode—no sorrow save death, which is inevitable.

Reader, I am telling the sequel of this story just as I told the rest of it. You have followed the characters through good report and evil report, and now I must close. I hope many a reader will gain as fair a prize as I did, but I sincerely hope none will have any of my unpleasant experiences.

. . . . .

Seven years have passed since the visit of my childhood days to Uncle Jack's. Many dear to me have been called from earth, while many more have left the places where I spent much of my time in early youth. I am still young, yet I feel rather old. My age is only twenty and six years. Many of my good kinsfolk have married since my delightful stay at Uncle Jack's.

Cousin Ethel and sister Lucy are attending school, preparing themselves for the great work of the Master in heathen lands. I think they will marry before they start for their destination. Thrumbull and Elias Bone are the lucky gentlemen, two nice young ministers. Ah! some mail for me—it is the invita-



tion to their wedding next Monday. Cousin Bertie, Mamie Bell, and James Burch are married and doing well, but they are in other climes. Cousin Tom is a fine, good-looking young man (I never expected it), "setting" the girls and having a good time in life; he is one of our prominent workers in the cause of education. I am still at the bank; have the same office I started with. Why not rise higher? What is the use of rising higher, when my income rises all the time? I work on commission now, and get one hundred dollars per month. I have the good will of all. My pretty little wife and I are respected by the richest and best people in Ledgerwood. We expect to live here.

Those who regard youthful marriage as a failure are mistaken. I advise all young people to marry. Marry while you love and can enjoy yourselves. Marry poor, if you cannot do any better. Marry anyhow, for economy's sake—you will save what you make, when before you spent all.

Well, you may inquire after the welfare of two more noted characters—Mr. Seaguards and Glypse Warnerk. I will tell you how they are getting along. Mr. Seaguards was pardoned by the governor on account of ill health, after having served out four years of his sentence. He had aged considerably, and seemed a changed man in every respect. He lived with me two years, and we agreed in all things. I was instrumental in securing his pardon and release. He had consumption, and died last year. My former rival, Glypse, was set free last year at my request, or approval. He married Adeline Summers, and moved to the far West. He was as happy



as a bird. He moved away that he might be a better man, and forget the dishonorable scenes in which he acted at Ledgerwood. I saw him once afterwards, happy and contented in his far-distant home. I also saw Cousin Mamie and her husband on the same trip out West.

Edgar Bruce and Jennie Fowler married. All the rest of the connection are doing well. But I will hurry to a close, for I must see sister Lucy's and Cousin Ethel's double marriage. They are to marry on the rear platform of the train that will carry them to the coast.

I have the sweetest of wives and the happiest of homes. Kind reader, if you ever happen to pass through Ledgerwood, I wish you to call and see us. We would be happy to meet you, and would welcome you as cordially as we know how. While I am writing this for the author, a figure of exquisite beauty is bending over my shoulder and reading line after line. There! did you hear that? I kissed her and baby Tee Castolina; and here come Robert and Leoan to say farewell to you.

I know it is hard to part, but I must say farewell to all. I wish everyone happiness and success in the fullest measure. My better half and three pretty ones join with me in this good wish.

In saying a final adieu I do not know whether to offer any apologies or not. It suffices that I have had the opportunity and privilege of relating this story. We ask that you always think kindly of Mr. and Mrs. Cartier and their three little ones. May Heaven bless you, my readers, with the choicest things of this life, and crown you at last with immortal bays!



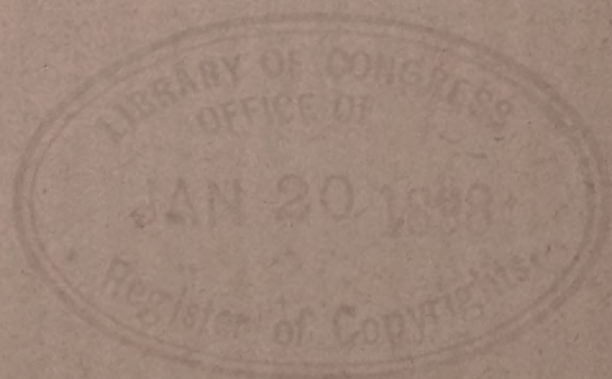




# A YEAR WITH UNCLE JACK



W. Thomas Carden



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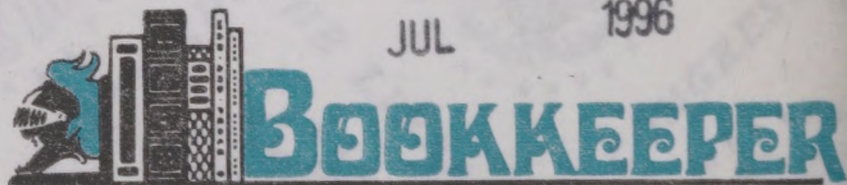




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